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ABSTRACT

This resource packet is designed to help teachers incorporate the study of ancient Greek and Roman art into junior and senior high school classrooms. The packet consists of four curriculum units based upon aspects of classical life or culture. These units are: "Daily Life; Mythology"; "Images of Power"; and "Echoes of Antiquity." The units were developed to prepare secondary level students for and build on corresponding gallery visits to the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts, but the materials may be adapted for independent use. Each unit focuses on selected objects in the museum collections and outlines projects which may be done before,during, and after a museum visit. Background information and a black and white reproduction of each art object is provided. A series of questions encourage student description, interpretation, and creative response to the works of art. Reproducible "Discovery Sheets" provide a range of interdisciplinary activities that students can complete either on their own or in small groups. These activities require students to gather information, develop observation and comparison skills, and encourage reflection upon connections between the art and culture of ancient Greeks and Romans and contemporary experiences. Suggestions for further reading and a glossary conclude the resource. (MM)

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EXPLORING CLASSICAL ART

AT THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON

ED 410 170

SO 028 090

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EXPLORING CLASSICAL ART

AT THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON

These four curriculum units were designed to help teachers incorporate visits to the classical collection of the Museum of Fine Arts into their classroom curriculum. Though the materials were developed by junior and senior high-school teachers for their students, the projects could be easily adapted for middle-school students.

The foundation of western civilization lies in the art, literature, philosophy, and politics of the classical world. What we now call "the classical world" covered a vast range of time and geography. Centered in present-day Greece and Italy, the ancient empires at times spread as far east as Persia, as far west as Spain, as far north as England, and as far south as Africa. Classical cultures began with the Mycenaean civilization (about 1600 - 1100 B.C.) and extended to the decline of the Roman Empire in the fourth and fifth centuries A.D. The Museum's collection offers the unique opportunity to learn about the ancient Greeks and Romans through primary sources: the art they created.

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To schedule a school group visit, call the Youth Group Visits Coordinator at (617) 267-9300 x310, Mondays through Thursdays, 8 am-4 pm.

INTRODUCTION

This packet is designed to help you make the most of your visit to the Museum of Fine Arts. Whether you have scheduled a guided or self-guided tour for your students, this packet suggests ways to connect a visit to the MFA's classical collection to your classroom curriculum. We hope to see you and your students here often.

The works of classical art preserved in the MFA's collection offer students the opportunity to see the Greeks and Romans as they saw themselves. Through direct experiences with these objects — by looking at how they portrayed themselves, their gods and goddesses, and their myths and legends — students can derive a wealth of information about what the people of the classical world were like. At the MFA, students can gain to a deeper understanding of these ancient civilizations, and recognize how the artistic achievements of the classical world have shaped the world we live in today.

This teacher resource packet consists of four units, each exploring a different aspect of the world of the ancient Greeks and Romans through works of art in the MFA.

Daily Life What can we learn about the everyday life of the ancient Greeks by looking at the objects they used and the depictions of everyday activities on those objects ? What did the inside of a Roman house look like?

Mythology How were the gods and goddesses, the heroes and heroines of Greek and Roman mythology portrayed in art? How were myths and legends told in visual form?

Images of Power How were real and legendary individuals depicted by Greek and Roman artists in ways that conveyed their power and authority? How has the tradition of portraying powerful people changed in modern society?

Echoes of Antiquity What elements of Greek and Roman architecture have continued to be used at various times (especially in American history), and why? What other elements of the classical heritage continue to be used by artists?

Each unit focuses on selected objects in the MFA collection, and outlines a sequence of projects to be done before, during, and after a Museum visit. These projects involve elements essential to experiencing art: looking at it, making it, thinking about it, and discussing it. **Pre-visit projects** introduce students to specific works of art in the collection, to important themes in classical art, and to basic looking skills. **Museum discovery sheets** suggest ways for students to look more closely at works of art, and in so doing to learn about the

art and artists of the past through careful observation and discussion. **Post-visit projects** build on the Museum experience, and encourage students to translate what they have learned about the classical world into their own terms. Each section includes a variety of activities, so you can pick and choose among them according to your curriculum needs. Many activities lend themselves to students working in pairs or small groups. Projects in all four units include questions designed to generate discussion through which students can share information and ideas, and connect the world of the Greeks and Romans to the world of today.

We hope that you will adapt these interdisciplinary projects to the particular needs and interests of your students, and that you will use the information and approaches suggested here to develop projects of your own. In addition, we encourage you to let us know how these materials have worked for you by returning the enclosed evaluation form. Your comments will help us continue the process of collaborating with teachers, and we look forward to hearing from you!

PLANNING A MUSEUM VISIT

At the MFA, you and your students can see one of the country's finest collections of classical art. These ancient objects were made, used, and treasured by the Greeks and Romans. As primary sources about the past, these objects carry important information about the world of Ancient Greece and Rome—information that students can discover for themselves through careful looking. These materials are designed to help foster those observation skills, both in the classroom and especially in the museum galleries, where students can explore original works of art.

Here are some suggestions for planning your visit to the MFA:

Guided and Self-Guided Visits In planning your visit, you may choose to have a Museum Gallery Instructor guide your group, guide your students yourself, or combine the two. If you decide to do both, plan a lunch break in between.

Logistics After you have scheduled your visit with the Youth Group Visits Coordinator, visit the Museum yourself, and familiarize yourself with the route your group will take from the School Group Entrance (on the same level as the cafeteria) to the galleries you plan to visit and back. Note dramatic spaces or objects along the way that you might ask students to look for and discuss later. Consider how much time you want students to spend in each gallery, and how much time it takes to get from one part of the Museum to another.

To facilitate small group activities, divide your class into groups of no more than ten, each with a chaperon.

Prepare your chaperons for the visit so they understand what their role is and how they can help you achieve your objectives. The more they know, the more useful they can be.

Museum Etiquette Tell students that they'll need to use all their senses at the Museum EXCEPT their sense of touch. Remind them not to touch works of art or the display cases. As you know, food, drink, and chewing gum are not allowed in Museum galleries.

Have students bring notebooks and *pencils* for sketching and/or writing in the galleries. Please ask them not to use walls, cases, or pedestals as writing surfaces.

Structure Most students can concentrate on one project for about an hour, so if you plan to stay longer consider scheduling a break and varying activities.

Begin by orienting your students to the galleries they will be working in, introduce the theme(s) they will explore, and demonstrate strategies for looking at works of art.

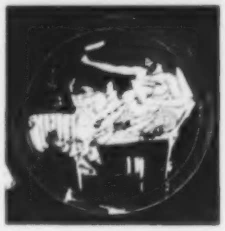
Structure your time in the gallery so that students spend some time together as a group and some time working on their own on a project. Many teachers use "discovery sheets" to help structure independent student activities. Using these sheets, students find particular objects and answer questions, make sketches, or start writing projects based on particular works of art.

Remind students they can learn more about objects that interest them by reading the labels. Having students work independently in twos or threes encourages discussion and cooperative learning.

Discovery Sheets The **Museum Visit** section of each unit includes sample discovery sheets. We suggest that you choose one or more of these sheets, or develop new ones based on your own needs and interests.

Have fun! We hope students will leave wanting to come back again with their friends and family to explore different parts of the Museum of Fine Arts.

DAILY LIFE



Who were the ancient Greeks and Romans? What kind of work, rituals, and games occupied them? What were their most valued possessions, their most respected beliefs? This unit will explore these questions and offer students a glimpse of what a typical day might have been like for these people. Examining vase paintings, students will discover pictures of the daily rituals of the ancient Greeks and the tales of gods and heroes who held their imaginations. Students will also examine sculpture, wall paintings, gold and bronze jewelry, tools, and armor.

Students will go on a modern-day "archeological dig," and consider the clues that artifacts reveal about a culture. They will think about how the materials and forms of these objects have changed over the centuries, and consider how the form of an object relates to its function. As a final project, students will construct a "Museum of Modern Life" exhibition presenting the most significant artifacts of their own lives.

PRE-VISIT PROJECTS

Digging Up The Present

Introduction Have students collect a variety of modern-day vessels: juice containers, soda bottles, plastic jars, cereal boxes, styrofoam containers, etc. Then ask them to forget what they know about the assembled objects, and to imagine that they are looking at objects over 4,000 years old. These objects are all that remains of an ancient civilization; their assignment as archaeologists is to extract as much information about the ancient civilization as possible by analyzing the visual characteristics of each object. Divide the class into teams, assign each an object, and have teams present their findings to the class.

Suggested Materials A collection of found vessels.

Suggested Time One to two class sessions.

Suggested Guided Questions Imagine we're on an archeological dig in the year 4000 and we've just come upon these objects.

Describe the size and shape of each object.

How did the people of the late twentieth century decorate objects? ("decoration" will be advertising, directions, etc.)

Did they depict people on their containers?

If so, who are they and what are they doing?

What materials did they use?

Can you tell how or where these objects were made?

Where and how would these objects have been used in the "ancient" civilization?

How long were these objects in use?

What could we say about the people who used them?

The Art of Living: Selections from the MFA Collection

Before you visit the MFA, familiarize students with some of the objects they will encounter by showing slides in the classroom. (Slides can be borrowed or purchased from the MFA Slide Library; see Appendix, page 8 for further information.) Use the following general discussion questions to stimulate discussion. Other discussion topics are included in the "MFA Collection" section at the end of this unit.

Suggested Guided Questions

How does the form (the particular shape and size) of a vase relate to its function (the way it was used)?

Where is the main scene found on the vase? Where else is the vase decorated and how?

How does the decoration of a vase relate to its shape?

What can we learn about life in ancient Greece and Rome through these objects (materials available, technology, favorite subject matter, etc.)?

Inventing a New Vessel

Introduction

Students will invent a design for a vessel and consider how the form, material ,and decoration relate to its function. Their drawings could be displayed in the classroom or in the school hallway with students' written descriptions below.

Suggested Materials

Sketch paper; white paper for final drawing; pencils; erasers; and colored pencils, colored inks, or markers.

Suggested Time

Two or more class sessions. Students will need one class period to begin thinking and sketching and at least an additional class to execute their finished drawings.

Suggested Guided Questions

If you were to come up with a new design for a vessel or container, what would be some important considerations?

What would you want your container to hold? Something precious?

Would this be something you would use everyday? Rarely?

How would your form have to fit the intended function? You could make this a humorous or fantastic object in which the form might disguise or defy the function.)

What material(s) would you use?

What sort of decoration would you want for the outside of your piece?

Would you want it to reveal or conceal the contents?

MUSEUM VISIT: TEACHER'S GUIDE

Introducing Daily Life At the MFA, students can directly experience the world of the Greeks and Romans through the works of art they created.

"Daily Life" is an intriguing theme for students, focusing on objects that were actually used by the ancient Greeks and Romans. Many of these objects — drinking cups, sports equipment, mirrors, and money — can be easily compared with similar objects in use today. During your time in the galleries, encourage students to notice the similarities and differences between life in the ancient world and life today.

Developing a Theme Introduce the theme(s) they will explore, which may include:

- Learning about the different lives led by men and women in ancient Greece through the objects they used;
- Identifying different types of Greek vases, and analyzing the narrative scenes and patterns with which they are decorated;
- Understanding the design and decoration of a Roman house.

Finding Your Way When you arrive at your starting point in the classical galleries, begin by orienting your students to the galleries where they will be working. Explain, for instance, the organization of the galleries by country and time period. You could also explain that every object in the galleries is accompanied by a label that provides basic information about the artist, subject matter, date, material, etc., and gives the object's accession number. The accession number tells you when that object was acquired by the MFA. For example, an object whose accession number is 99.344 was the 344th object to be acquired in 1899.

Choosing Objects Pick several objects to look at and discuss as a group. Choose these objects from the "MFA Collection" section, or make your own selections. Remember: objects chosen for the "MFA Collection" section are usually on view, but occasionally an object you want to use may be moved or taken off exhibition (for conservation, for a special exhibition at another museum, or for some other reason). During this initial group discussion, model strategies for learning about the classical world through careful looking at works of art. A simple way to begin is to ask students to describe what they see (from the most obvious to the smallest detail) and to build up a body of knowledge about an object through visual analysis. Ask questions that students can answer just by looking, and add additional information at the end. Allow ample time for discussion at each object.

If you have assigned research projects related to specific works of art, have students report on their findings while you are still together as a group.

Discovery Sheets After you have set the stage through group discussion, give students a project they can complete while looking on their own or in small groups. **Discovery sheets** can be developed to help structure this independent work. These sheets should include a variety of questions, and should offer a choice of writing and sketching activities. The information, impressions, and ideas gathered through this museum activity can be used to begin projects to be completed in the classroom. **The following questions and activities offer examples of what a discovery sheet might look like; select the ones that most closely meet your needs, or develop new ones.** Depending on how much time you have, choose two or three sheets to photocopy and distribute to your students.

Wrapping Up Set a time and place for your students and chaperons to regroup. Ask students to share some of their discoveries. What did they learn about life in ancient Greece and Rome? If they had a choice, would they want to live like the Greeks or the Romans, or stay in the present?

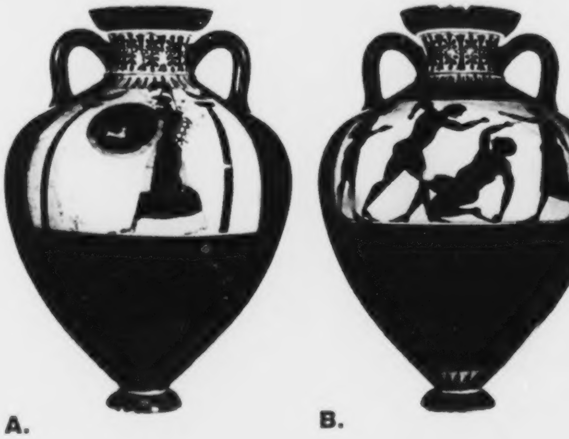
Have fun exploring!

DAILY LIFE: FROM THE MFA COLLECTION

1. Two-handled Jar ("Dipylon" Amphora) Attic, 8th century B.C.

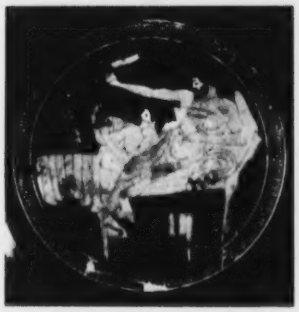
2. Grave Stele of a Youth
Greek, Archaic, about 550 B.C.
Marble

3. Two-handled cup (Kylix)
Attributed to the Proto-Panaitian shop
Athenian, red-figure
Late Archaic, 510-500 B.C.
Youth with jumping weights

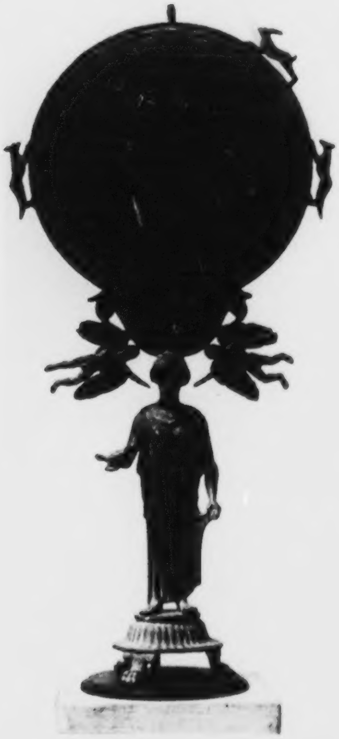

A.

B.

4. Two-handled Jar
(Amphora of
Panathenaic shape)
Attributed to the
Mastos Painter
Athenian,
black-figure,
about 530-520 B.C.
A. Athena
B. Boxers and Trainer



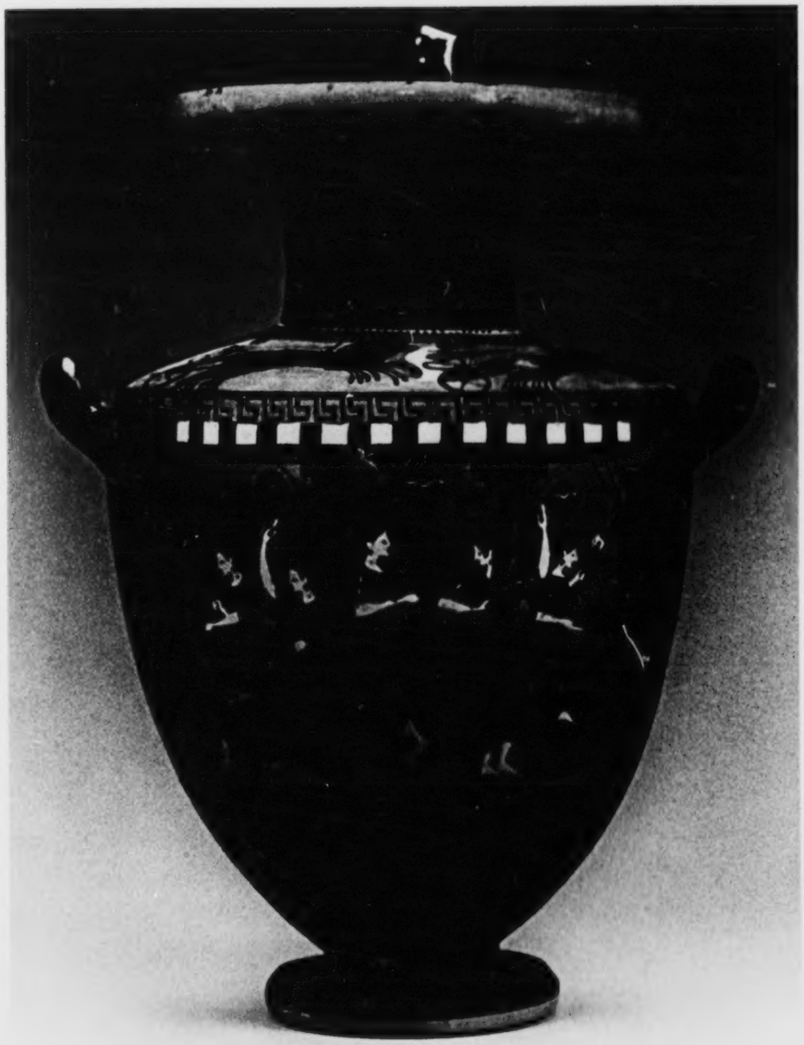
5. Two-handled cup
(Kylix)
Attributed to the
Foundry Painter
Athenian, red-figure,
about 480 B.C.
Interior: man and boy
on a couch



6. Mirror and Stand
Greek, about 460 B.C.
Bronze
Aphrodite and erotes;
hare pursued by
hounds

7. Oil Flask (Lekythos)
Attributed to the
Brygos Painter
Athenian, red-figure,
about 480-470 B.C.
Woman working wool

8. Water Jar (Hydria)
Attributed to the
Priam Painter
Athenian, black-
figure, about 520 B.C.
Women filling hydriae
in a fountain house
Athenian, black-
figure, about 520 B.C.



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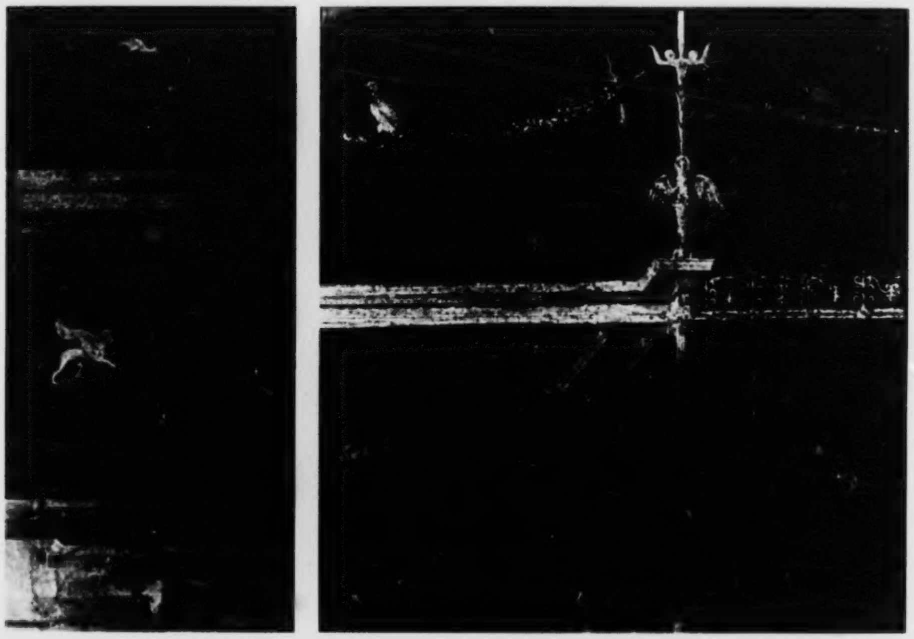

9. Wall paintings
Roman,
about A.D. 14-37
From Pompeii
Late third or early
fourth style

10. Ram's Head Rhyton
Attributed to the
manner of the Sotades
Painter, about 450 B.C.
on rim, seated youth
and woman with armor
(Achilles and Thetis?)

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DAILY LIFE: FROM THE MFA COLLECTION

1. Two-handled Jar ("Dipylon" Amphora) Attic, 8th cen. B.C.

Francis Bartlett Collection
03.782

In addition to regular household use, Greek pots were also used as grave markers in the eighth century B.C. This vase would have been set into the ground over a grave (notice that the lower section is decorated,) so that libations of wine or honey could trickle down through holes in the bottom. A crack along the shoulder of this vase was repaired in ancient times with lead clamps that are still visible today. Many vases like this one were found in a graveyard just outside the northwest gate of Athens known as the Dipylon or "Double" Gate. By the end of the seventh century B.C., carved stone slabs (like #2) became the preferred grave markers.

This large vase is decorated with motifs characteristic of the "Geometric" period in early Greek art because of the use of geometric designs. The entire vase is divided into bands, each filled with a different design. A narrow band of stags and birds runs around the neck, over warriors holding shields and spears. In the main frieze, long-haired men ride horses around the widest part of the vase. This line of horsemen, perhaps representing the funeral procession itself, also recalls the activities important to the early Greeks, such as hunting and warfare.

Discussion: Identify motifs and patterns used here, and consider their placement on the vase. Do certain areas draw your attention more than others? Suggest movement? Overall, what does the decoration suggest about Greek culture of the time?

2. Grave Stele of a Youth Greek, Archaic, about 550 B.C. Marble

Gift of Fiske Warren 08.288

Carved in low relief, the young athlete on this stele, or grave shaft, wears a victory wreath on his head and holds two pomegranates (symbols of eternal life) in his left hand. In his right hand he originally held an aryballos, a small vessel for carrying olive oil, hanging from a leather strap. Olive oil was given as a prize in athletic games; athletes also used it to clean their bodies by rubbing it into the skin and then scraping off the residue with a strigil, a curved bronze implement. This image shows the deceased as an athlete who will remain eternally victorious in the afterlife.

Discussion: Notice how the figure is shown in profile, and how the artist simplified parts of the body (look carefully at the face and hair). Compare this technique with the silhouette technique used by vase painters.

3. Two-handled cup (Kylix) Attributed to the Proto-Panaitian shop Athenian, red-figure, Late Archaic, 510-500 B.C. Youth with jumping weights

H.L. Pierce Fund 98.876

Physical training was a significant part of a young man's education in ancient Greece. Athletics were closely connected with religion, with sports contests being held as part of funeral and memorial rites as well as worship of the gods. In a more practical vein, athletic practice helped train young men for warfare.

Scenes from the gymnasium were frequently used to decorate drinking cups like this kylix. Here athletes are shown training for the long jump holding jumping weights. Sometimes a trainer also appears, shown wearing a cloak and carrying a rod; a flute player sometimes accompanies the exercises. In the galleries, look in the same case for examples of ancient sports equipment (discus and jumping weights).

Discussion: How has the painter created a sense of movement in a limited space? Discuss the role of sports in education today, and compare with the role of sports in Greek society.

4. Two-handled Jar (Amphora of Panathenaic shape)

Attributed to the Mastos Painter
Athenian, black-figure, about 530-520 B.C.
A. Athena
B. Boxers and Trainer
H.L. Pierce Fund 01.8127

Vases awarded as prizes at the Panathenaic Games (a festival like the Olympic Games) at Athens had their own characteristic shape and decoration. Like this amphora, they were large vases with tight handles and narrow necks and feet. Officially commissioned, Panathenaic vessels continued to be decorated in the black-figure technique long after it had been superseded by the red-figure for ordinary vase painting. Typically, Athena (founder and protector of the city of Athens) was depicted on one side, and one of the athletic events on the other side. This vase shows a boxing match; other events included chariot races and events from the ancient pentathlon (jumping, javelin and discus throwing, wrestling, and foot racing). We know this vase is not an official prize because it lacks the inscription "from the prizes at Athens."

Discussion: Can you think of occasions today when old-fashioned traditions are carried on to maintain links with the past? Can you think of reasons why unofficial copies of prizes would have been made?

5. Two-handled cup (Kylix)

Attributed to the Foundry Painter
Athenian, red-figure, about 480 B.C.
Interior: man and boy on a couch
H.L. Pierce Fund 01.8034

The kylix was the typical drinking cup of the ancient Greeks. This one shows scenes of a symposium, or drinking party, which was the most characteristic feature of an Athenian man's social life. The symposium involved a varying blend of eating, drinking, games, songs and riddles, philosophical discourse, and sex with courtesans and other men. A symposium usually took place in the men's quarters of a private home. The Greeks mixed their wine with water in a large vessel called a krater, then ladled it into a pitcher to pour into each guest's kylix as they sat or reclined on couches in the dining room. As seen in this image, there was often flute music. The man on the couch holding the kylix by one handle is about to play the game kottabos, which involves flicking the dregs left in the cup at a target on the wall.

Discussion: Compare the social life of the ancient Greeks, which was segregated by gender, with social life today.

6. Mirror and Stand

Greek, about 460 B.C.
Bronze
Aphrodite and erotes; Hare pursued by hounds
H.L. Pierce Fund 98.667

In the fifth century B.C., a Greek woman would have used this is the kind of mirror to arrange her hair and makeup looking into its highly polished bronze surface (the original color would have been the color of a new penny).

Without polishing, bronze (an alloy of copper and tin) oxidizes developing a darker surface color (patina), sometimes with a blue or green tone. The handle is, appropriately, an image of Aphrodite, the goddess of love and beauty. Aphrodite can be identified by the dove on her right hand and by her companions, two flying cupids. Around the mirror's edge, dogs chase rabbits, another reference to the game of love.

Discussion: Try to imagine what it would be like to live in a world where images of yourself were hard to come by (no full-length mirrors, photographs, etc.).

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7. Oil Flask (Lekythos) Attributed to the Brygos Painter Athenian, red-figure, about 480-470 B.C. Woman working wool

Francis Bartlett Fund 13.189

In Athens during the fifth century B.C., respectable women rarely left their homes. With the assistance of female slaves, they cared for children, prepared food, and made clothing. This tall, thin vessel, called a lekythos, was probably used by a woman for storing oil or perfume, and shows the process of spinning wool into thread.

Discussion: Notice how the decoration follows the form of the vessel, and how the artist suggested different textures (hair, clothing, wool, wooden furniture) through the use of line.

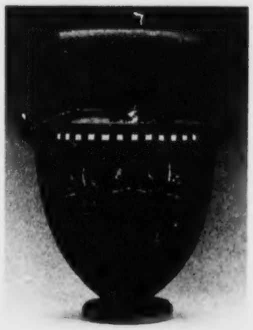
8. Water Jar (Hydria) Attributed to the Priam Painter Athenian, black-figure, about 520 B.C. Women filling hydriae in a fountain house

William Francis Warden Fund 61.195

Used for holding water, the hydria is a large vase with three handles. The two small handles on the shoulder were used to lift the hydria when it was filled at a fountain, and the large handle at the back was used when pouring the water out. The image on this vase shows women in the process of getting water from the public fountain house. Because the task involved social mingling outside the house, gossip at the fountain, and the possibility for flirtation along the way, it was thought an unseemly one for well-bred young women, so slave women were sent instead. Along the same lines, women were not allowed to go to the market for food, since it involved money changing hands, so men took responsibility for getting household provisions.

Scenes of this type are common on hydriae of the late sixth century B.C., and reflect the pride the Athenians had in their fine system of public fountains.

Discussion: How has the artist turned an everyday occupation into a pleasant occasion? (Don't forget to point out the animal head spouts.)



9. Wall paintings
Roman,
about A.D. 14-37
From Pompeii
Late third or early fourth style
24.46, 38.734

These paintings once decorated the walls of a room or rooms that opened onto a peristyle (an open courtyard surrounded by a covered colonnade) in a villa in the suburbs of Pompeii; they were uncovered about 1900. Because of burial of the towns of Pompeii and Herculanaeum during the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in A.D. 79, we know a lot about how the Romans lived and how they decorated their houses at that time. Paintings like these were popular among the well-to-do. Delicate architectural elements were used to create an airy sense of space. Various creatures and objects allude to the gods: a griffin for Apollo, and a panther for Dionysos/Bacchus in one panel; a peacock for Hera/Juno and a tambourine for Dionysos in the other. In the gallery, look for other pieces of sculpture that came from this villa: a table, supported by griffins, that stood in the center of the villa's entry hall, and four herms (shafts) that stood in the corners of the garden enclosed by the colonnade.

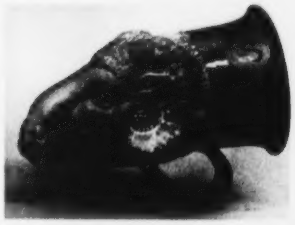
Discussion: Think about the different ways walls are treated in houses today, and how they reflect the functions of different rooms (kitchen, bedroom, etc.).

10. Ram's Head Rhyton
Attributed to the manner of the Sotades Painter,
about 450 B.C.
on rim, seated youth and woman with armor (Achilles and Thetis?)
Perkins Collection 95.38

While other Greek pottery was made using a potter's wheel, this kind of drinking vessel, called a rhyton, was made using a mold in order to capture the naturalistic detail of a ram's head. Rhytons were made in the shape of animal heads (lions, bulls, and donkeys in particular), but the ram was one of the most popular shapes in Athens at this time (around the middle of the fifth century B.C.).

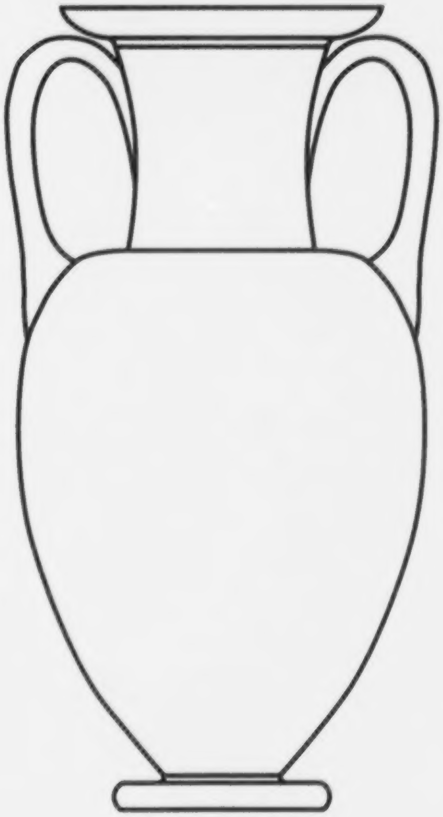
Rhytons made of precious metal, stone, and clay were used in the Minoan and Mycenean civilizations, probably for ritual drinking at banquets or in ceremonies in honor of the gods. In fifth-century Athens, rhytons again gained popularity. Fifth-century Athenians might have used this kind of drinking vessel for a variety of symbolic reasons. In the first place, they might have used the rhyton because they thought it was the kind of cup used by great Bronze Age heroes like Achilles or Odysseus. The rhyton was also associated with rituals for the dead. Throughout antiquity the dead were believed to have the privilege of banqueting with the gods and heroes. Placing this vessel in a tomb was a way of reinforcing this belief, and insuring that the deceased person had the right equipment for the new life in the hereafter. Because the ram was the animal most commonly sacrificed to the gods and heroes, drinking or pouring wine from a ram-shaped vessel would refer to sacred rituals of blood sacrifice. For all these reasons, rhytons came to symbolize the communication between the everyday world and the world of the immortal gods and heroes.

Discussion: Consider the shape of this vessel carefully, and try to figure out how the Greeks would have used it. (A vessel like this was not meant to stand on its own except when empty, when it could stand upside down.) Are there occasions even today when old-fashioned traditions are maintained for symbolic purposes (graduations, weddings, etc.)? What are the functions of objects buried in tombs? After discussing the symbolism of the ram on this vessel, think about the shapes and symbols used for ceremonial vessels today (family heirlooms, sports trophies, etc.).



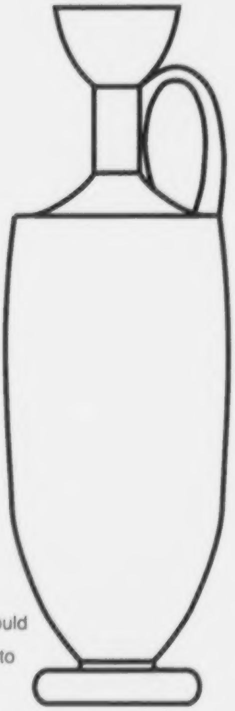
MUSEUM DISCOVERY SHEET

Greek Vases



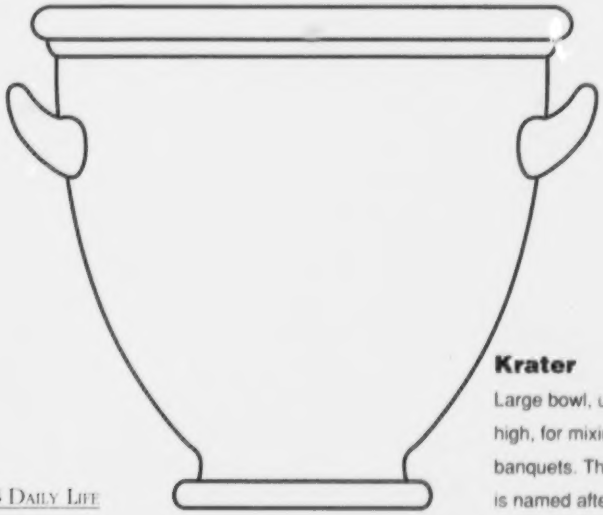
Amphora

Large storage jar between 50 cm and 2 meters tall. Used for liquids (and also for solids like corn or money).



Lekythos

Tall jar for oil or perfume. Could be any size, from 5 cm high to well over 1 meter.

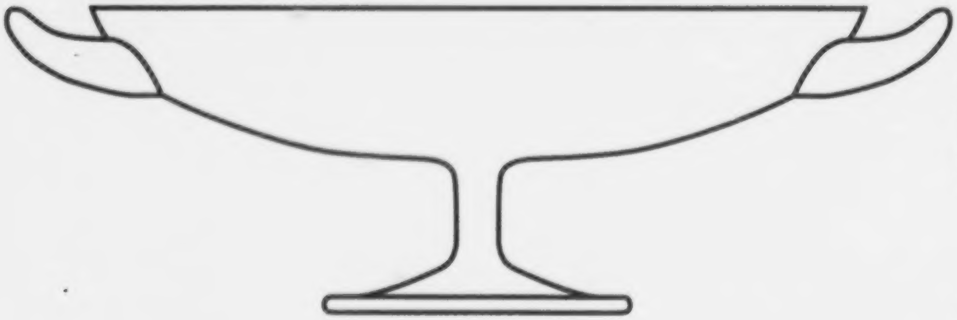


Krater

Large bowl, up to 1 1/2 meters high, for mixing wine and water at banquets. The crater of a volcano is named after its shape.

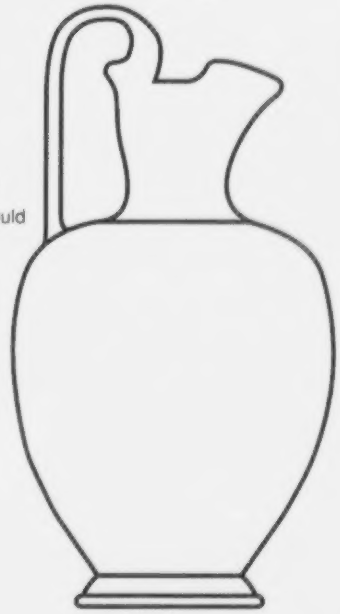
MUSEUM DISCOVERY SHEET

Greek Vases



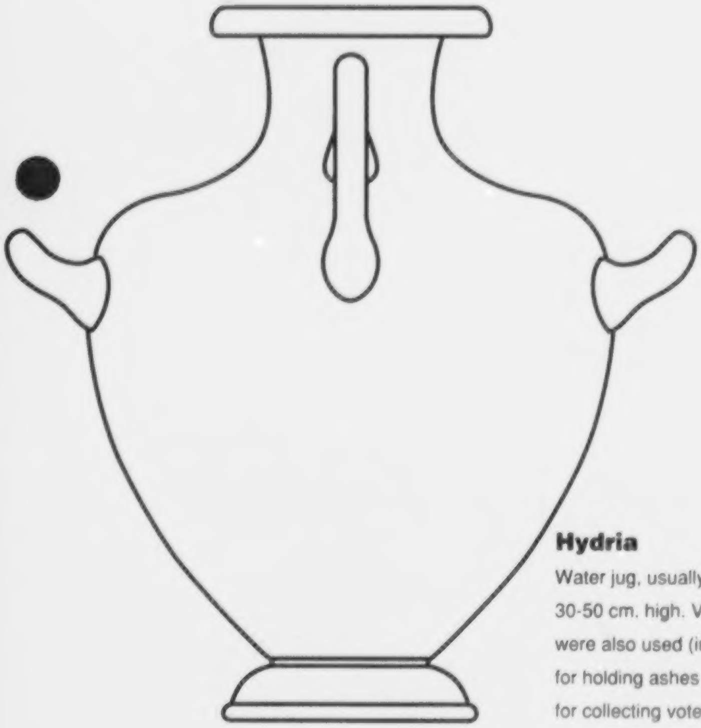
Kylix

Wine cup, probably for special occasions. Its shape must have made it quite awkward to drink from. Usually about 25 cm in diameter and about 10 cm high.



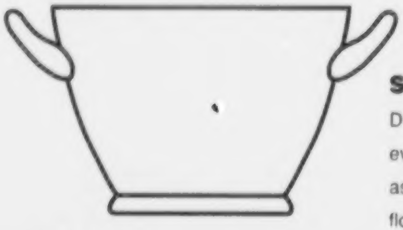
Oinochoe

Jar for pouring out wine. They varied greatly in size. They would be filled from the krater.



Hydria

Water jug, usually between 30-50 cm. high. Vases like these were also used (in larger sizes) for holding ashes at funerals, and for collecting votes at elections.



Skyphos

Drinking cup probably for everyday use. They were about as big as a medium-sized flowerpot (about 30 cm high).

Looking to the Past

Look for at least three vessels of different shapes that you find interesting. Take as much space as you need to draw them. You may want to draw just a simple outline based on the shape of the vessel, or to draw it in more detail. What did each of these vessels hold?

How does the form of this vessel fit its function?

Where would you keep this at home and what would you use it for?

What do we have today that is similar in shape or use?

Type of Vase **Subject Matter** **Function**

1. ____
2. ____
3. ____

Greek Vases

There are many different images painted on these vessels:

ceremonies and celebrations
sports and recreational events
daily rituals
artists and musicians
people at work

Find and describe at least one example from each of these categories:

Describe your impression of some of the people you see. Who would you want to have a conversation with and why?

What can you tell about these people by looking at their features, poses, clothing, and expressions?

MUSEUM DISCOVERY SHEET

Athletes & Warriors in Ancient Greece

Look around until you find a mirror, a strigil, a discus, a jumping weight, greaves, a helmet, and a shield.

Object	**Made of?**	**Used for?**	**By whom?**	**Still exists?**

What kind of decoration or inscriptions have you found on each of these objects?

Why do you think decorations and/or inscriptions were added?

Now that you've seen the real thing, look for a picture of each of these objects in the paintings on the Greek vases. Describe the scene in which these objects are found.

Roman Wall Paintings

Look at the Roman wall paintings on the second floor. These paintings were found in the entry courtyard and the surrounding rooms of a country house near Pompeii.

Describe what you see in these paintings:..
....
....
....
....
....
....

Why do you think this kind of decoration was used?..
....
....

What kind of impression would these give a visitor entering the house?................
....
....
....

How do we decorate walls today? ....
....
....

If you were to design a mural painting for your house or room, what would it look like? You can either describe your design or sketch it on the next page. Consider how the image might relate to the space in your house.

MUSEUM DISCOVERY SHEET

Museum Dialogue

Imagine a conversation between any two characters – human or beast – that you've discovered on one of the paintings, sculptures, or vases.
What do you think these characters might want to say to one another?

A Dream Sweepstakes

Congratulations! You've just won the Museum of Fine Arts Sweepstakes Jackpot and have your choice of any three objects in the classical collection. Which things would you choose?

1.____
2.____
3.____

Why?..

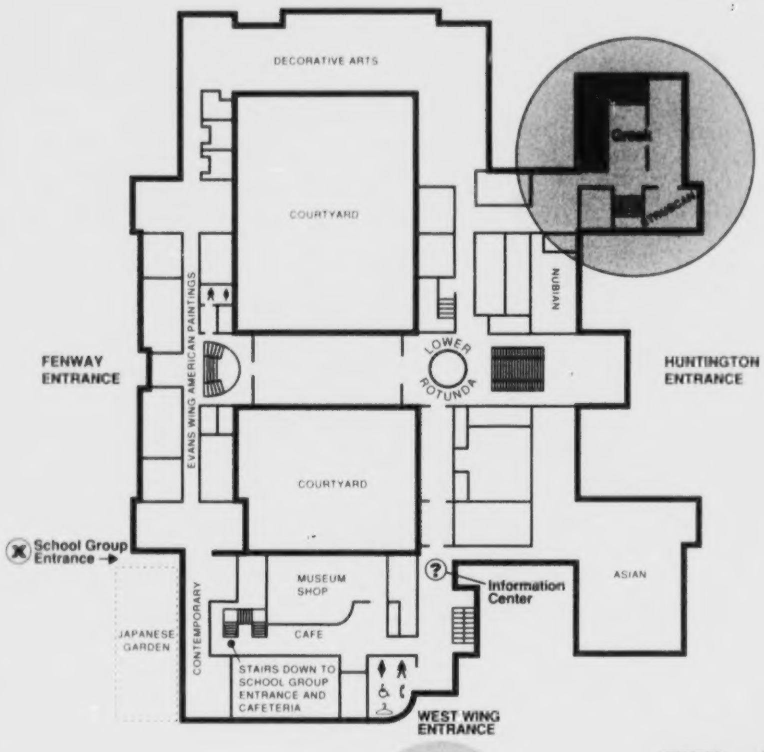
What room would you put them in at home and why?..

Describe the strangest object you've found during your exploration of the classical galleries:..

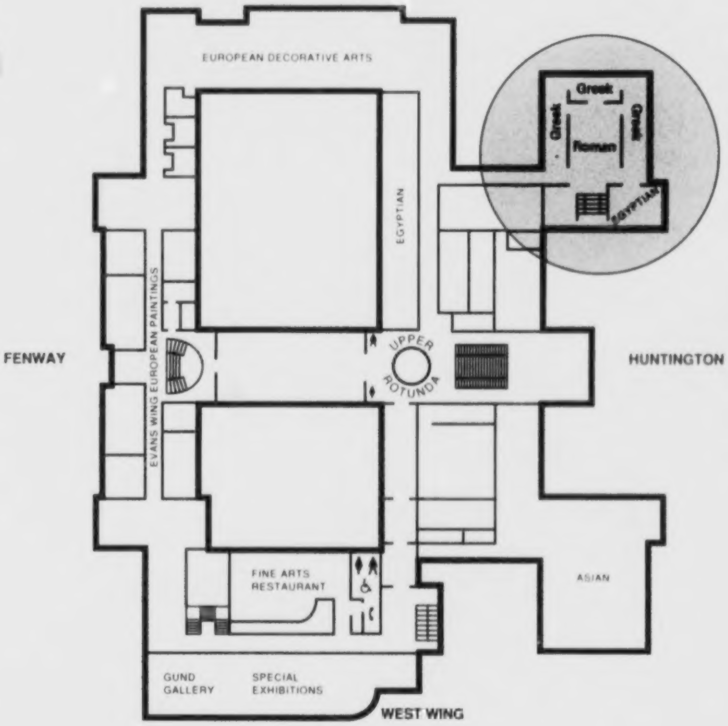
If you could step into a time machine for a day in ancient Greece or Rome, what would you want to see and do?...

What custom or activity did the ancient Greeks and Romans have that you would like to see practiced today?..

MAPS TO GALLERIES


DECORATIVE ARTS
Greek
ETRUSCAN
COURTYARD
NUBIAN
FENWAY ENTRANCE
EVANS WING AMERICAN PAINTINGS
LOWER ROTUNDA
HUNTINGTON ENTRANCE
COURTYARD
School Group Entrance →
MUSEUM SHOP
Information Center
ASIAN
JAPANESE GARDEN
CONTEMPORARY
CAFE
STAIRS DOWN TO SCHOOL GROUP ENTRANCE AND CAFETERIA
WEST WING ENTRANCE

First Floor


EUROPEAN DECORATIVE ARTS
Greek
Greek
Greek
Roman
EGYPTIAN
EGYPTIAN
FENWAY
EVANS WING EUROPEAN PAINTINGS
UPPER ROTUNDA
HUNTINGTON
FINE ARTS RESTAURANT
ASIAN
GUND GALLERY
SPECIAL EXHIBITIONS
WEST WING

Second Floor

DAILY LIFE

1. Two-handled Jar ("Dipylon" Amphora)

2. Grave Stele of a Youth

3. Two-handled cup (Kylix)
Int: Youth with jumping weights
Ext: Athletes

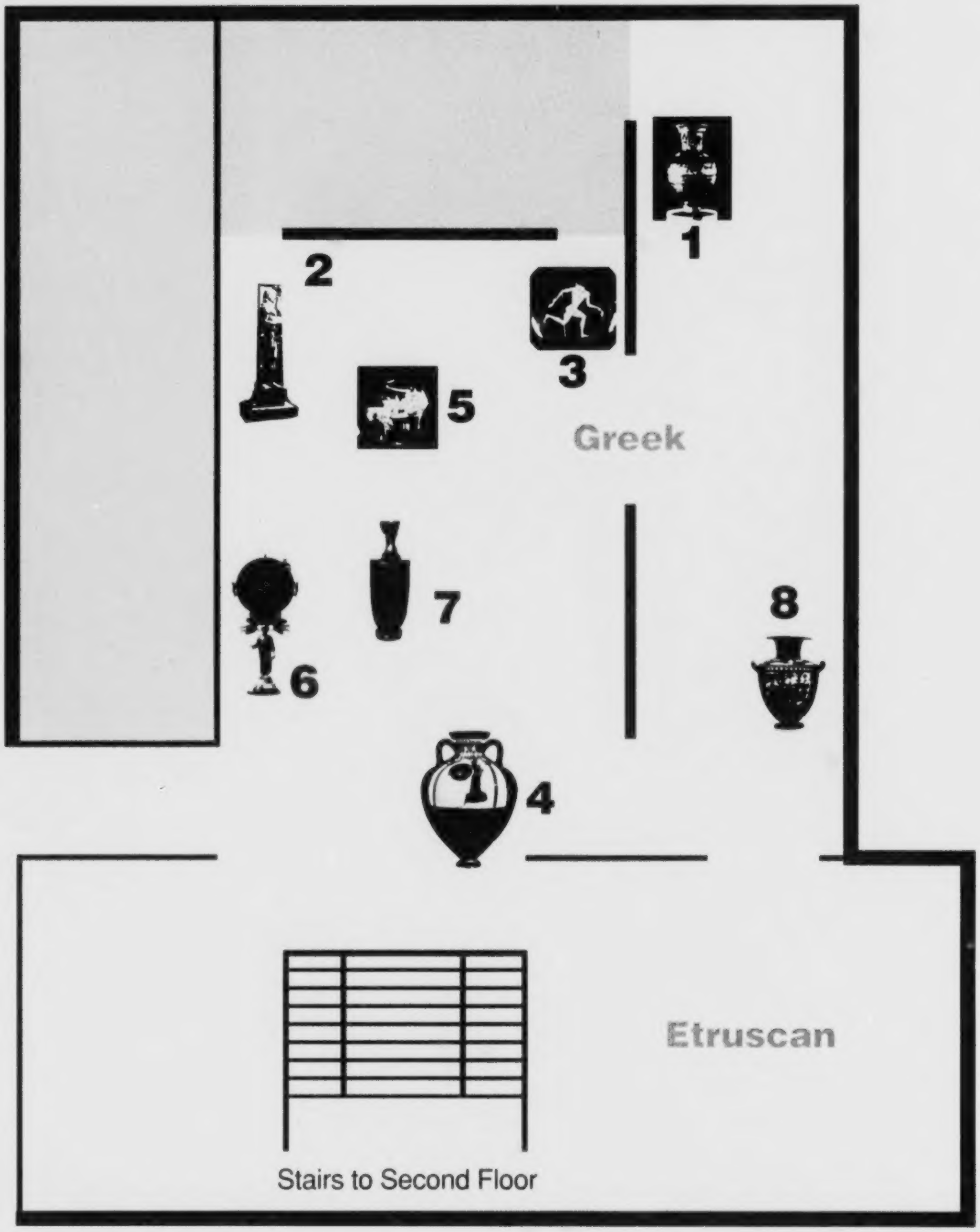
4. Two-handled Jar (Amphora of Panathenaic shape)
A. Athena
B. Boxers and Trainer

5. Two-handled cup (Kylix)
Interior: man and boy on a couch

6. Mirror and Stand
Greek,
about 460 B.C.
Aphrodite and erotes; hare pursued by hounds

7. Oil Flask (Lekythos)
Woman working wool

8. Water Jar (Hydria)
Women at a Fountain House

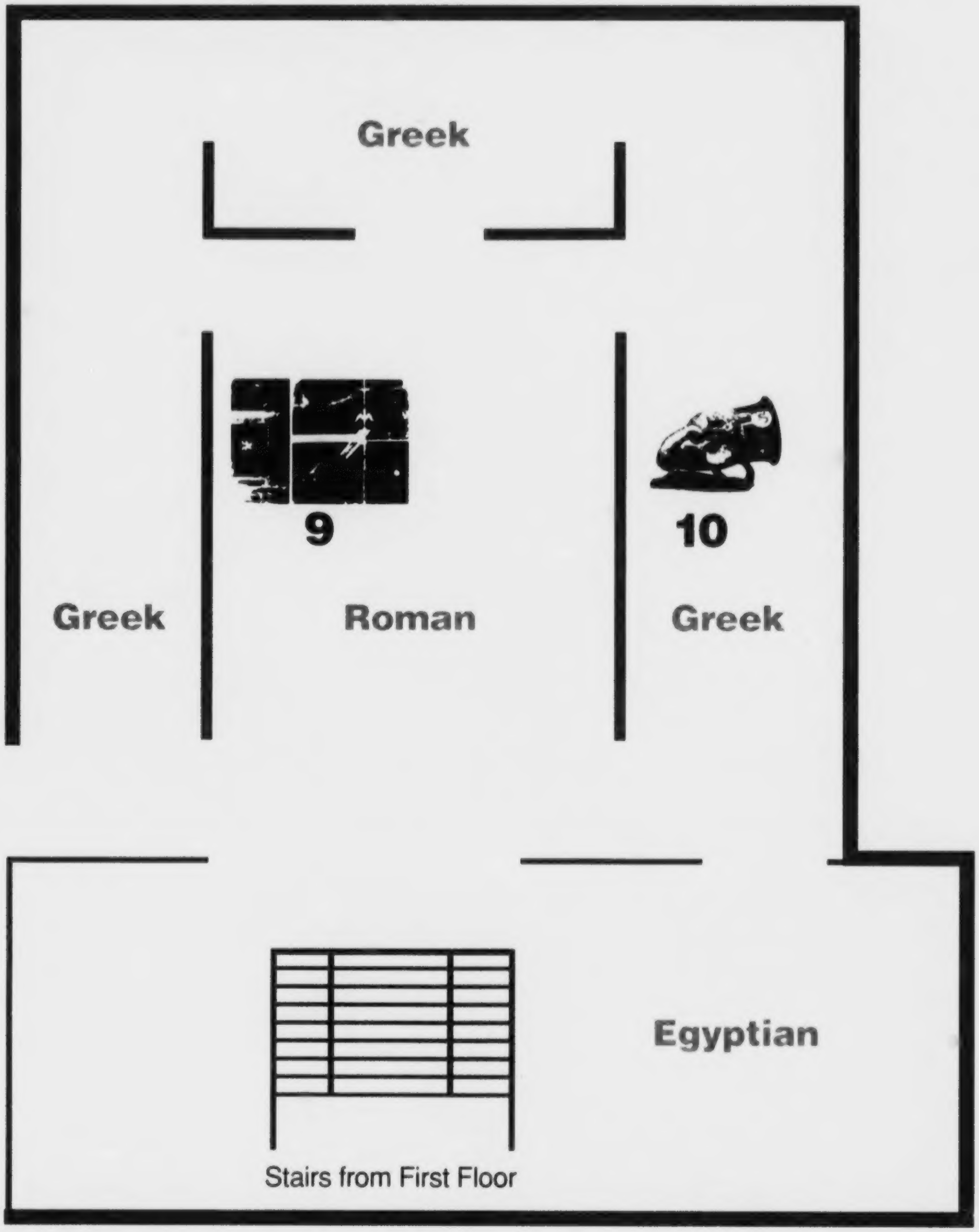


First Floor

DAILY LIFE

9. Wall paintings From Pompeii

10. Ram's Head Rhyton


Greek
Greek
Roman
Greek
9
10
Egyptian
Stairs from First Floor

Second Floor

POST-VISIT PROJECT

Creating a Museum of Modern Life

Introduction Students will organize and construct a museum exhibition of contemporary artifacts that reveals the values, interests, and rituals of their own lives. They may take on the role of museum guides in designing orientation tours for other students. This exhibition could be put up in the classroom or in a public space within the school.

Suggested Materials A variety of contemporary objects (all chosen by students); a place to display these in the classroom (along the wall on tables or shelves); paper or fabric on which to place objects; paper or cardboard for labeling objects; markers; a roll of brown craft paper and tempera paints for making murals or other illustrations that might accompany this exhibit; cardboard for making posters or signs.

Suggested Time The exhibit may be assembled within a week but will probably take longer, depending on how much time of each class session is devoted to it.

Suggested Guided Questions If you were to design a museum exhibition of your own that would show visitors in the year 4000 what life was like today, what sorts of things would you want them to see?

What things would reveal today's values? Interests? Hobbies? Most important creations? Rituals? Social Life? Work?

How would you organize this exhibit?

Into what categories should the exhibition be divided?

What other things do you need to include that would best serve the public?

Activities Ask students to bring in at least one object to include in the exhibition, and divide the class into groups to organize and install it. Discuss the various kinds of people in a museum who are involved in creating exhibitions (curators, educators, designers, conservators, etc.) and decide what job assignments will be needed for your exhibition. For example, will there be label descriptions for the objects in the exhibition, and if so, what kind of information will they contain?

Once the exhibition is this organized, think about creating tours to present it to others in the school.

OTHER PRE- AND POST-VISIT PROJECTS

1. Have students write a play or story about a typical day in the life of a Greek or Roman teenager, including museum objects as props. Consider daily rituals, social events, chores, etc.

2. With a partner, write and present a conversation "in the street," a dialogue between two Greek or Roman characters.

3. Prepare a traditional Greek or Roman meal and invite another class to share it.

4. Have students create a profile of an imaginary ancient Greek or Roman family. This might include their names, portrait drawings, personality profiles, descriptions of their hobbies and interests, a floorplan of their home with designs for their individual bedrooms.

5. Have students write a story based on notes from museum observations and sketches. This might be inspired by a sculpture, painting, or other object in the collection. What kind of event is taking place? Who are the people involved? What is the relationship between them?

6. Design and plan a school "Olympic Field Day," including Greek sports and games such as discus throwing, marathon, etc. Create prizes to give to the winners of these events.

7. Draw a floorplan or construct a model of a Roman house, labeling the rooms. Or adapt a Roman house for use in New England, explaining the changes that would be needed.

GREEK AND ROMAN MYTHOLOGY

In this unit students will explore the nature of myth and heroes in classical Greece and Rome. Students will discuss the artist's role as storyteller, analyze the ways in which stories were represented in the art of these ancient cultures, and consider the importance of mythology in the art of this century.

PRE-VISIT PROJECTS

The Art of Storytelling

Introduction

After students have read and studied the *Odyssey*, the *Iliad*, or the *Aeneid*, have them recreate one episode by drawing it in a sequence of separate small drawings. Like comic strips, these narratives can be humorous, fantastic, or serious accounts of scenes adapted from one of the epic poems. Students will carefully consider the selection and order of individual scenes, using scenery and props, lighting (use of dark and light to create mood), and placement and gestures of characters to tell their story. Or, using the same considerations, have students write a film script.

Suggested Materials

White drawing paper (for finished drawing), sketching paper, pencils, erasers, colored pencils, markers, pen and ink, film books (illustrating the use of camera angles, lighting, viewpoint, etc.), comic strips, illustrated mythology books.

Suggested Time

One class session for researching and perhaps beginning the first sketches, plus two or three class sessions to draft a few drawings, and additional time to make their final revisions and finished drawings.

Suggested Guided Questions

How can a visual artist be like a storyteller?

What do they have in common?

All artists are composers, which means they have to arrange many pieces together to make a whole picture or story.

Think about how movie directors compose scenes, for example. What kinds of things do they use when setting up a scene?

What other things help them get across their ideas to the audience?

Read aloud a selected passage from one of the classical texts and ask students how they visualize the scene in their minds:

> If you were to take on the role of director for this scene, how many shots would you need in order to tell this part of the story?
>
> What might your first shot look like?
>
> What lighting and point of view (angle, close-up, etc.) would you want?
>
> What would you show next?

Pick an interesting passage from one of your readings, and think about how you would create a storyboard, or a sequence of drawings in order to illustrate this episode. This may look like a comic strip with five or six frames.

The Power of Myth: Selections from the MFA Collection

Classical myths have been told and retold for centuries, in different forms — in art, literature, theater, music, and dance. Before visiting the MFA, discuss how the ancient Greeks and Romans themselves told these compelling stories. You can use slides and the following guided questions to focus on the nature of myth and of heroes, and how myths were represented by the ancient Greek and Roman in visual form. (Slides can be borrowed or purchased from the MFA Slide Library; see Appendix, page 8, for further information.) Other questions are included in the "MFA Collection" section at the end of this unit.

Suggested Guided Questions

What event or story is being represented in this work?

Who are the characters involved, and how can you identify them?

How did the artist arrange the people and objects in this image to show what is important?

Is there anything you would change or add if you were to create this piece? How would your interpretation be different?

Who are some of your heroes?

Can you think of other contemporary heroes ? What makes these people heroes to us?

What is a myth?

What is its function?

What makes a myth strong or powerful?

Can you think of any contemporary myths ?

MUSEUM VISIT: TEACHER'S GUIDE

Introducing Mythology

At the MFA, students can directly experience the world of the Greeks and Romans through the works of art they created.

During a "Mythology" visit to the MFA, students can meet the heroes and heroines of classical mythology in person. Looking at the many different ways mythological characters and stories are portrayed — both in classical art and in the art of more recent centuries — students will gain a deeper understanding of the significance of mythology in western civilization from classical times to the present. During your time in the galleries, encourage students to think about the ways stories are told in art and in literature. How are they the same? How different?

Developing a Theme

Introduce the theme(s) they will explore, which may include:

- Learning to recognize the features, attributes, and symbols that identify mythological characters, including gods and goddesses, heroes and heroines, and fantastic creatures;
- Analyzing the narrative techniques used by Greek and Roman artists to depict myths in visual form;
- Tracing episodes in the Trojan War through art objects;
- Comparing the way myths are depicted in works of art with the way they are told in the epic poetry of the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, and the *Aeneid*.

Finding Your Way

Use the map included here to plan your route. When you arrive at your starting point in the classical galleries, begin by orienting your students to the galleries where they will be working. Explain, for instance, the organization of the galleries by country and time period. You could also explain that every object in the galleries is accompanied by a label that provides basic information about the artist, subject matter, date, material, etc., and gives the object's accession number. The accession number tells you when that object was acquired by the MFA. For example, an object whose accession number is 99.344 was the 344th object to be acquired in 1899.

Choosing Objects

Pick several objects to look at and discuss as a group. Choose these objects from the "MFA Collection" section, or make your own selections. Remember: objects chosen for the "MFA Collection" section are usually on view, but occasionally an object you want to use may be moved or taken off exhibition (for conservation, for a special exhibition at another museum, or for some other reason). During this initial group discussion, model strategies for learning about the classical world through careful looking at works of art. A simple way to begin is to ask students to describe what they see (from the most obvious to the smallest detail) and to build up a body of knowledge about an object through visual analysis. Ask questions that students can answer just by looking, and add additional information at the end. Allow ample time for discussion at each object.

If you have assigned research projects related to specific works of art, have students report on their findings while you are still together as a group.

Discovery Sheets

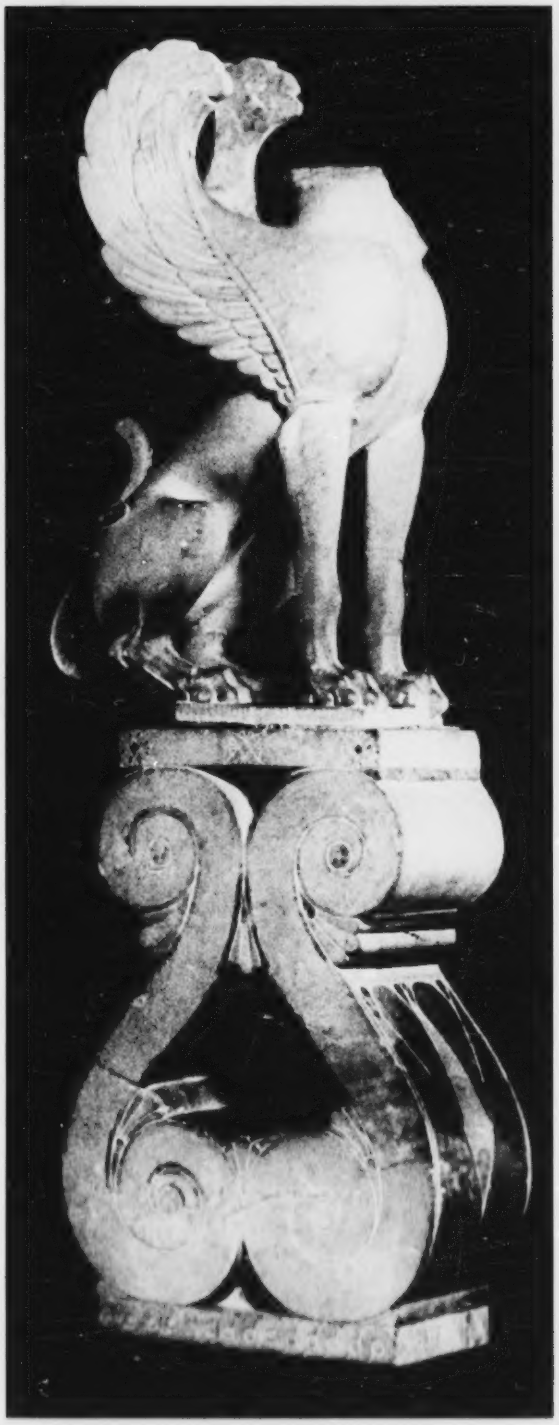
After you have set the stage through group discussion, give students a project they can complete while looking on their own or in small groups. **Discovery sheets** can be developed to help structure this independent work. These sheets should include a variety of questions, and should offer a choice of writing and sketching activities. The information, impressions, and ideas gathered through this museum activity can be used to begin projects to be completed in the classroom. **The following questions and activities offer examples of what a discovery sheet might look like; select the ones that most closely meet your needs, or develop new ones.** Depending on how much time you have, choose two or three sheets to photocopy and distribute to your students.

Wrapping Up

Set a time and place for your students and chaperons to regroup. Ask students to share some of their discoveries. What did they learn about the role of mythology in ancient Greece and Rome? Are there any modern myths or heroes that figure as largely in our world as the Trojan War did in the world of the Greeks and Romans?

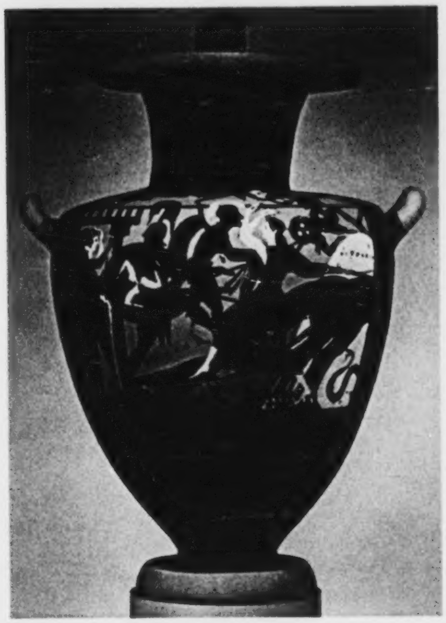
Have fun exploring!

MYTHOLOGY: FROM THE MFA COLLECTION



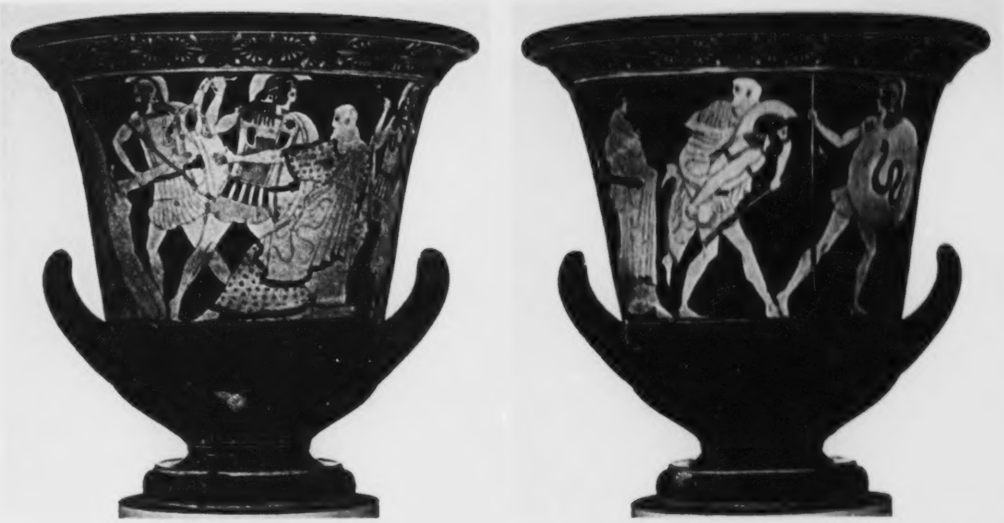
1. Upper Part of a Grave Stele: Seated Sphinx
Greek, Archaic, about 535-530 B.C.
Marble

2. Two-handled jar (Amphora)
Attributed to Group E
Athenian, black-figure, about 540 B.C.
The Birth of Athena



3. Water jar (Hydria) Attributed to the Antiope group Athenian, black-figure, about 520 B.C. The Dragging of Hektor

4. Mixing Bowl (Krater) Attributed to the Altamura Painter Athenian, red-figure about 470-460 B.C. Scenes from the Fall of Troy



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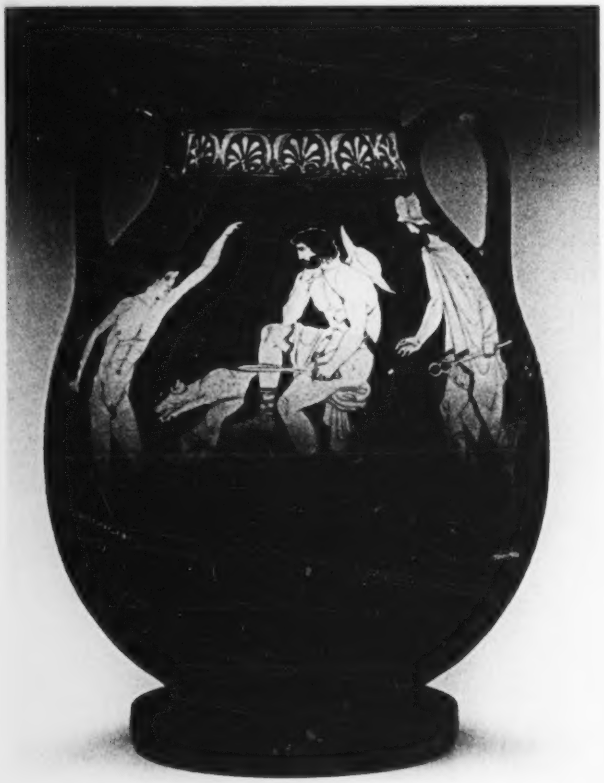

5. Two-handled jar (Pelike)
Attributed to the Lykaon Painter
Attic, red-figure, about 440 B.C.
Odysseus seated on a rock conversing with the shade of Elpenor; at right Hermes

6. Sarcophagus with Triumphal Procession of Dionysos
Roman, about A.D. 215-225
Marble, probably from the Proconnesos in the Sea of Marmara

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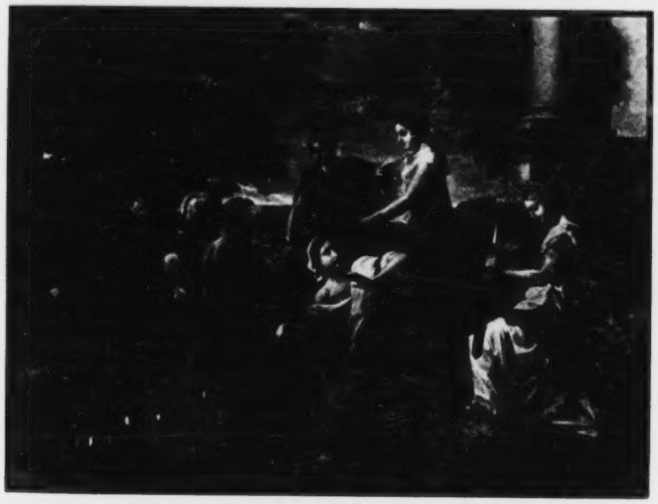
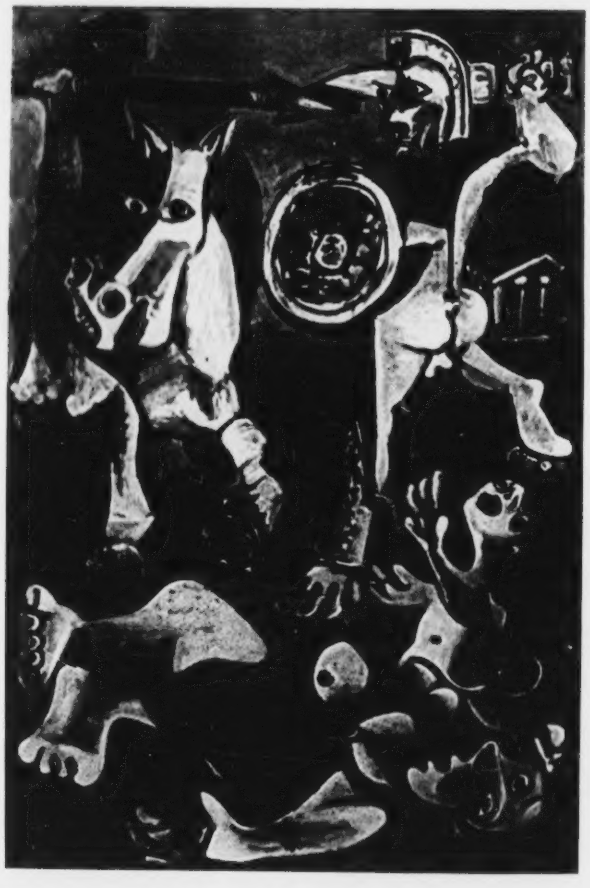


7. Nicolas Poussin
French, worked in
Rome, 1594-1665
Discovery of Achilles
on Skyros, about
1650-51
oil on canvas

8. Pablo Picasso
Spanish, 1881-1973
The Sabines, 1963
oil on canvas



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1. Upper Part of a Grave Stele: Seated Sphinx

Greek, Archaic, about 535-530 B.C.
Marble
1931 and 1939 Purchase Funds
40.576

In Greek mythology, the sphinx — a creature with the body of a lion, wings of an eagle, and head of a woman — was frequently used as a guardian figure. This sphinx, and the elegant double-volute capital on which she sits, comprised the top portion of an elaborate grave marker. While the body is shown in profile, the missing head would have been turned to look straight at the viewer. This type of marker became popular in Attica (the region of Greece surrounding Athens) toward the end of the seventh century B.C. This sphinx is an example of archaic (old) art, referring to the period from about 600 to 480 B.C., when many of the fundamentals of Greek art were established.

One famous sphinx crouched on the top of a rock along the road to the city of Thebes, and stopped all travelers with this riddle: "What animal walks on four legs in the morning, on two at noon and on three in the evening?" Those who could not solve the riddle were killed. Finally, Oedipus came up with the answer: "Man, who crawls on all fours as a child, then walks upright on two feet, and finally moves with the assistance of a cane in old age." Furious to have her game spoiled, the sphinx threw herself from her rock and died.

This sculpture was originally painted in strong colors. The hair of the missing head was painted black, the feathers of the wings were green, black, red, and blue; and the capital was painted in red and black. Look for traces of this paint when you visit the galleries, and imagine how the sphinx would have looked brightly painted.

Discussion: Look at the way the sphinx crouches on top of the column, ready to protect the deceased from any danger. What powers does the sphinx derive from each of its parts — lion, eagle, and human? Look for other representations of sphinxes throughout the classical galleries, and compare the way the sphinx is represented by different artists in sculpture and in vase painting.

2. Two-handled jar (Amphora)

Attributed to Group E
Athenian, black-figure, about 540 B.C.
The Birth of Athena
H.L. Pierce Fund 00.330

This amphora is painted in black-figure technique, which was developed in the seventh century B.C. and was used widely throughout the sixth century and into the fifth century when it was replaced by red-figure technique. In black-figure painting, figures were drawn in silhouette in black against the natural reddish-orange background of the clay pot. Details were incised (cutting into the black to make a white line), and touches of red or white paint were sometimes added.

According to Greek tradition, Athena's birth was an unusual event: the goddess burst out of the head of Zeus, fully-grown and armed for battle. Here we see Zeus in the center, seated on a lion throne (notice the sphinx crouching underneath) and surrounded by attendants: Hermes and Apollo to the left, Ares and (probably) Eileithia (the goddess of childbirth) on the right. A miniature adult Athena pops out of the top of Zeus's head.

The characters can be identified by their attributes (the things they wear or hold): Zeus by the thunderbolts in his right hand; Apollo by his lyre; Hermes by his brimmed hat and winged shoes and Ares by his helmet, spear, and gorgon shield.

Discussion: What moment in the story is depicted? Notice how the artist has created a symmetrical composition by carefully balancing the elements placed on either side of Zeus. Where do the various hand gestures direct your eye?

3. Water jar (Hydria)

Attributed to the Antiope group
Athenian, black-figure, about 520 B.C.
The Dragging of Hektor

William Francis Warden Fund
63.473

This vase depicts one of the most poignant episodes in the *Iliad*. Achilles, the Greek army's most accomplished warrior, has killed the Trojan prince Hektor in revenge for his having killed Patroklos. One of Achilles' best friends, Patroklos had been killed when he took Achilles' place on the battlefield while the hero was sulking in his tent because of an insult to his honor. Instead of allowing the Trojans to retrieve Hektor's body for burial, Achilles gouged holes in Hektor's ankles, tied him to a chariot, and dragged him in front of the walls of Troy, and later around the tomb of Patroklos.

This scene is filled with action, all happening in a shallow, stage-like space. Hektor's parents, Priam (white beard) and Hecuba (hand to forehead in a gesture of mourning) are shown in the royal palace (indicated by a roof supported by a column) in the hilltop city of Troy. Facing them is Achilles, who is about to mount his chariot on the battlefield in the plain below the city. To the right, behind the horses pulling the chariot, is the white tomb mound of Patroklos, from which his soul — a miniature winged warrior — emerges. A snake, another symbol of the spirit of the dead, appears at the bottom of the burial mound. The artist has created an emotionally powerful image by bringing together events that, in the *Iliad*, happened at two different times and places. The final moment in this episode is illustrated by the winged goddess Iris, who appears to join the two halves of the story. After many days of discussion, the Olympian gods sent Iris to Priam to suggest that he end the dispute by ransoming Hektor's body.

Discussion: Compare this composition with the "Birth of Athena." How has this artist conveyed a greater sense of movement and activity (consider overlapping figures, figures cut off at the edge of the scene, diagonal lines, etc.).

4. Mixing Bowl (Krater)

Attributed to the Altamura Painter
Athenian, red-figure, about 470-460 B.C.
Scenes from the Fall of Troy

William Francis Warden Fund
59.178

Continuous frieze of episodes from the Trojan war, including the rape of Cassandra at the Palladion; Neoptolemos hurling Astyanax from the city walls; Priam seeking refuge at the Palace altar; Aeneas carrying his father Anchises out of the city

By the end of the sixth century B.C., red-figure technique replaced black-figure in vase painting. In this krater, we can see that red-figure is practically a reversal of the older technique, with the figures shown in the reddish-orange color of the clay, and the background and interior details of the figures painted in a shiny black glaze. The red-figure technique allowed artists to create more solid and detailed images.

The primary side of the vase depicts two scenes from the end of the Trojan war, showing the harshness with which the victorious Greeks treated the defeated Trojans. On the left King Priam, seated on an altar that he hopes in vain will protect him, is about to be murdered by Neoptolemos. Neoptolemos also grasps the baby Astyanax, Hektor's son, and is about to throw the child off the walls of Troy to his death. On the right is Priam's daughter Cassandra; stripped naked, she clings to a statue of Athena as Ajax the Lesser tries to pull her away. The frontal, archaic statue of Athena may represent the Palladion, a legendary statue said to have been sent to Troy by Zeus. Father and daughter reach toward each other.

The other side shows a group of Trojans escaping their destroyed city. Aeneas carries his aged father, Anchises on his back; his wife, Creusa, follows behind. Aeneas later became a major figure in the myths of Rome.

Discussion: Notice the ways the artist has used gestures and glances to connect the different scenes. What does the choice of scenes represented say about the outcome of the war for the defeated Trojans?

5. Two-handled jar (Pelike)

Attributed to the Lykaon Painter
Attic, red-figure, about 440 B.C.
Odysseus seated on a rock conversing with the shade of Elpenor; at right Hermes
William Amory Gardner Fund
34.79

This vessel, a variation on the amphora form called a *pelike* (pell-ee-kay), illustrates an episode in the eleventh book of the *Odyssey*. Odysseus travelled to the entrance of the underworld, where he hoped to speak to the spirit of the Theban seer Teiresias to find out what the future held in store for him (especially in the matter of getting home). Following the instructions given to him by the sorceress Circe, Odysseus dug a pit and sacrificed black rams. The first spirit to arrive was that of Elpenor — a surprise for Odysseus, who did not know that his comrade had fallen from the roof of Circe's palace as the Greeks prepared to leave the enchanted island. Since Elpenor's death went unnoticed and he had not been buried with the customary rites, he could not truly enter the world of the dead. This vase shows Elpenor asking Odysseus for a proper burial; the sacrificed rams are between them, and Hermes (who guides souls to the underworld) looks on.

Discussion: The figures originally appeared in a rocky landscape picked out in ghostly white. Look carefully at this vase in the gallery and try to figure out where some of the ground lines would have been. How does the "body language" of each character reflect his role in this story?

6. Sarcophagus with Triumphal Procession of Dionysos

Roman, about A.D. 215-225
Marble, probably from the Proconnesos in the Sea of Marmara
William Francis Warden Fund
1972.650

Elaborately carved marble coffins like this one came into fashion in Rome in the second century A.D., and grew in popularity in the third century. This sarcophagus was made by Greek sculptors working in Rome for the booming Roman market. Sarcophagi could be decorated in a variety of ways — with scenes from the life of the deceased, with representations of the four seasons, with battle scenes, or like this one, with stories from Greek mythology. Here we see a triumphal procession for Dionysos (in the chariot at left) celebrating his victory over Herakles (far right) in a drinking contest. Dionysos' chariot is drawn by Indian elephants, preceded by other exotic animals, half-human satyrs and Pans, and dancing maenads. Small cupids, masks, and empty jugs refer to Dionysos as the god of wine, revelry, and theater. The use of Dionysiac subject matter may refer to hoped-for pleasures of the afterlife.

Discussion: On this sarcophagus, the main characters were placed not in the center but at the ends. How are these figures differentiated from the other members of the "cast"? The figures are carved almost fully in the round (this technique is called high relief); compare this approach to the human figure and to storytelling with vase painting, noting the different advantages of each.

7. Nicolas Poussin
French, worked in Rome, 1594-1665
Discovery of Achilles on Skyros, about 1650-51
oil on canvas
46.463

Forewarned of his death if he fought in the Trojan War, Thetis disguised her son Achilles as a woman and hid him among the daughters of King Lycomedes on the island of Skyros to prevent the Greeks from recruiting him to fight in the war against Troy. When the seer Calchas told the Greek leaders they could not take Troy without Achilles, Ulysses and Diomedes went to Skyros to look for the young warrior. Disguising themselves as merchants, they recognized him when, unlike the daughters of Lycomedes, Achilles ignored the jewels and chose a sword and helmet out of their chests instead.

Discussion: Consider the episode from the legend of the Trojan War which the seventeenth-century French artist Poussin chose to depict, and compare it with the scenes from the Trojan War popular with Greek artists. What props did Poussin use to set the stage in ancient Greece? Poussin and other artists of his time admired the symmetry and harmony of classical art; how is that admiration reflected in the composition of this painting?

8. Pablo Picasso
Spanish, worked in France 1881-1973
The Sabines, 1963
oil on canvas
Julian Cheney Edwards Collection, Tompkins Collection, and Fanny P. Mason Fund in Memory of Alice Thevin 64.709

In 1963, reacting to the Bay of Pigs crisis that brought the United States and the Soviet Union to the brink of nuclear war, Picasso turned to an ancient Roman myth to give expression to his own feelings on war. According to legend, the first settlers on the site of the future city of Rome were short of marriageable women, so they kidnapped wives from the neighboring Sabine tribe. The Sabine men bided their time, then mounted a surprise attack on the Romans to regain their women. The Sabine women, in the meantime, had become happy in their new lives, and tried to stop the conflict between their fathers and brothers, and their new Roman husbands. Other artists have shown the Sabine women successfully ending the fighting, but Picasso's version is less optimistic.

Discussion: How did Picasso show that this painting is set in ancient Rome? Describe what is happening in the painting, and imagine what each character is thinking. Look for places where the artist exaggerated or distorted features; what effect does it create? How do the strong colors contribute to the overall effect of the painting? What do you think he is saying about war? Why do you think he chose a mythical subject rather than a specific depiction of current events?

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

MUSEUM DISCOVERY SHEET

How Artists Tell Stories

Compare the treatment of the mythological stories in literature and in vase painting. Read the appropriate passages while looking at the vases showing Achilles dragging the body of Hektor (*Iliad,* book 24) or Odysseus conversing with the shade of Elpenor (*Odyssey*, book 11).

Choose a work of art in the European paintings galleries that reflects one of these themes explored in the Odyssey.

1. The journey
2. Patience and endurance
3. Coming of age
4. Husband/wife relationships

(You might also come up with an *Odyssey* theme of your own.)

Sketch the work here:

Title:______________________________Artist:______________________________

Notice the composition(what is put where) of the work; the artist's choice of shape, color, texture, and detail; the atmosphere created in the work, the way your eye is drawn over it.

Compose a poem which attempts to capture the artwork in words. Make sure you use concrete images from the work you've chosen.

Trojan War

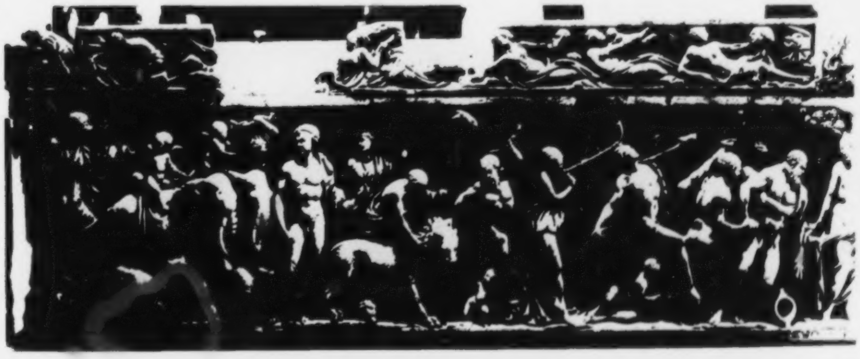
In the European painting gallery, find the Poussin painting called "Discovery of Achilles on Skyros." Before reading the story on the label, try to guess what is happening based on the pose, expression, and arrangement of the figures. Discuss what kinds of effects are more possible to achieve in oil painting than in vase painting.

In the classical galleries (second floor), find the sculpted head of Homer. What is your impression of the poet after looking at this sculpture?

Describe what gives you this impression about this portrait:

MUSEUM DISCOVERY SHEET

Look for the large white marble sarcophagus in the front of the first room on the second floor:



Describe its function:

What do we have in our culture today that is similar?

What is taking place here?

List the characters—animal and human—who are part of this procession:

List (at least) three adjectives that describe this scene:

What do you imagine will happen in the next moment following this scene on the sarcophagus?..

....

....

What happened in the moment just prior to this event?..

....

Based on one small part of this sculpture, sketch or write a short description of what you think these moments might look like in the box below.

In Search of Gods and Goddesses, Heroes and Heroines

Find two mythological characters — man, woman, or beast — in a work of art and write a conversation they might have. See if your classmates can identify your characters just from this conversation.

(Character's name)

(Character's name)

(Character's name)

(Character's name)

Make sure you identify your characters, and the work of art where they appear.

MUSEUM DISCOVERY SHEET

Look for the following mythological creatures and describe (or sketch) the work of art in which each creature appears:

On what objects did you find these creatures?..

sphinx (body of a lion, wings of an eagle, head of a woman),

....

centaur (half man, half horse),

....

cyclops (one-eyed giant),

....

griffin (half eagle, half lion),

....

Are these images used as decoration or as elements in a story? ....

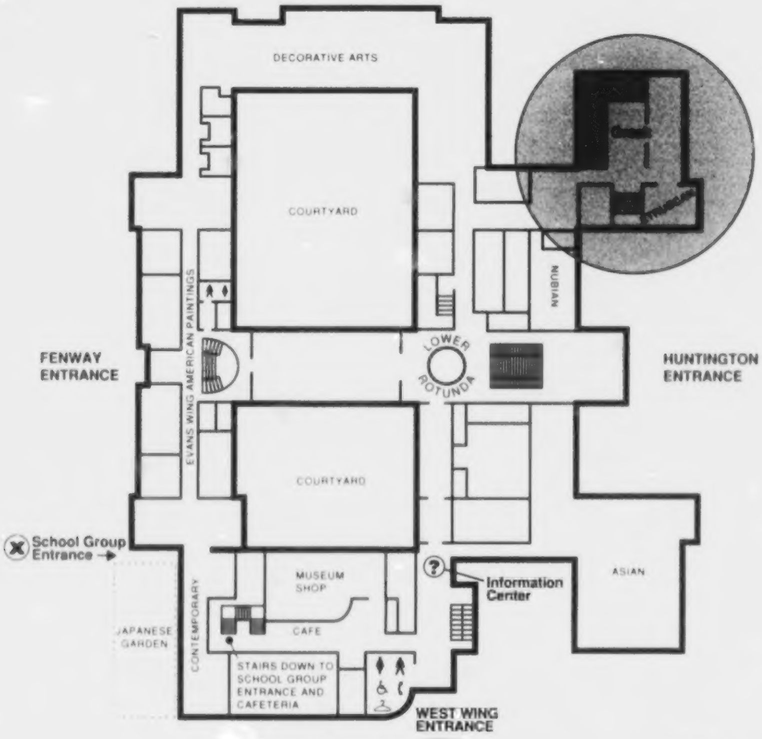
....

What other beasts did you find?...

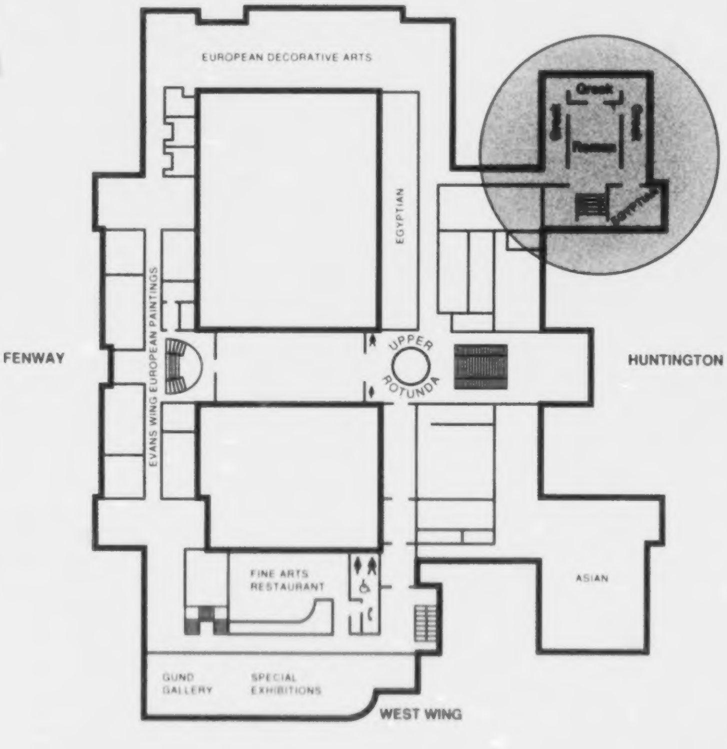
....

Create your own mythological creature — something that no one has ever seen before. You may want to draw this beast or describe it in words. What are its powers?..

MAPS TO GALLERIES


DECORATIVE ARTS
COURTYARD
COURTYARD
EVANS WING AMERICAN PAINTINGS
FENWAY ENTRANCE
LOWER ROTUNDA
HUNTINGTON ENTRANCE
NUBIAN
Greek
ASIAN
School Group Entrance
JAPANESE GARDEN
CONTEMPORARY
MUSEUM SHOP
CAFE
Information Center
STAIRS DOWN TO SCHOOL GROUP ENTRANCE AND CAFETERIA
WEST WING ENTRANCE

First Floor


EUROPEAN DECORATIVE ARTS
EGYPTIAN
Greek
Greek
Greek
Roman
Egyptian
FENWAY
EVANS WING EUROPEAN PAINTINGS
UPPER ROTUNDA
HUNTINGTON
ASIAN
FINE ARTS RESTAURANT
GUND GALLERY
SPECIAL EXHIBITIONS
WEST WING

Second Floor

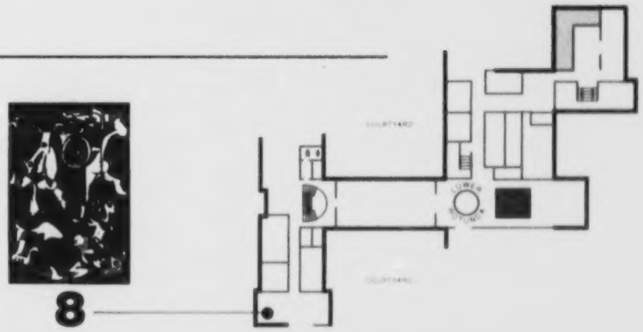
MYTHOLOGY

1. Upper Part of a Grave Stele: Seated Sphinx

2. Two-handled jar (Amphora) The Birth of Athena

3. Water jar (Hydria) The Dragging of Hektor

8. Pablo Picasso The Sabines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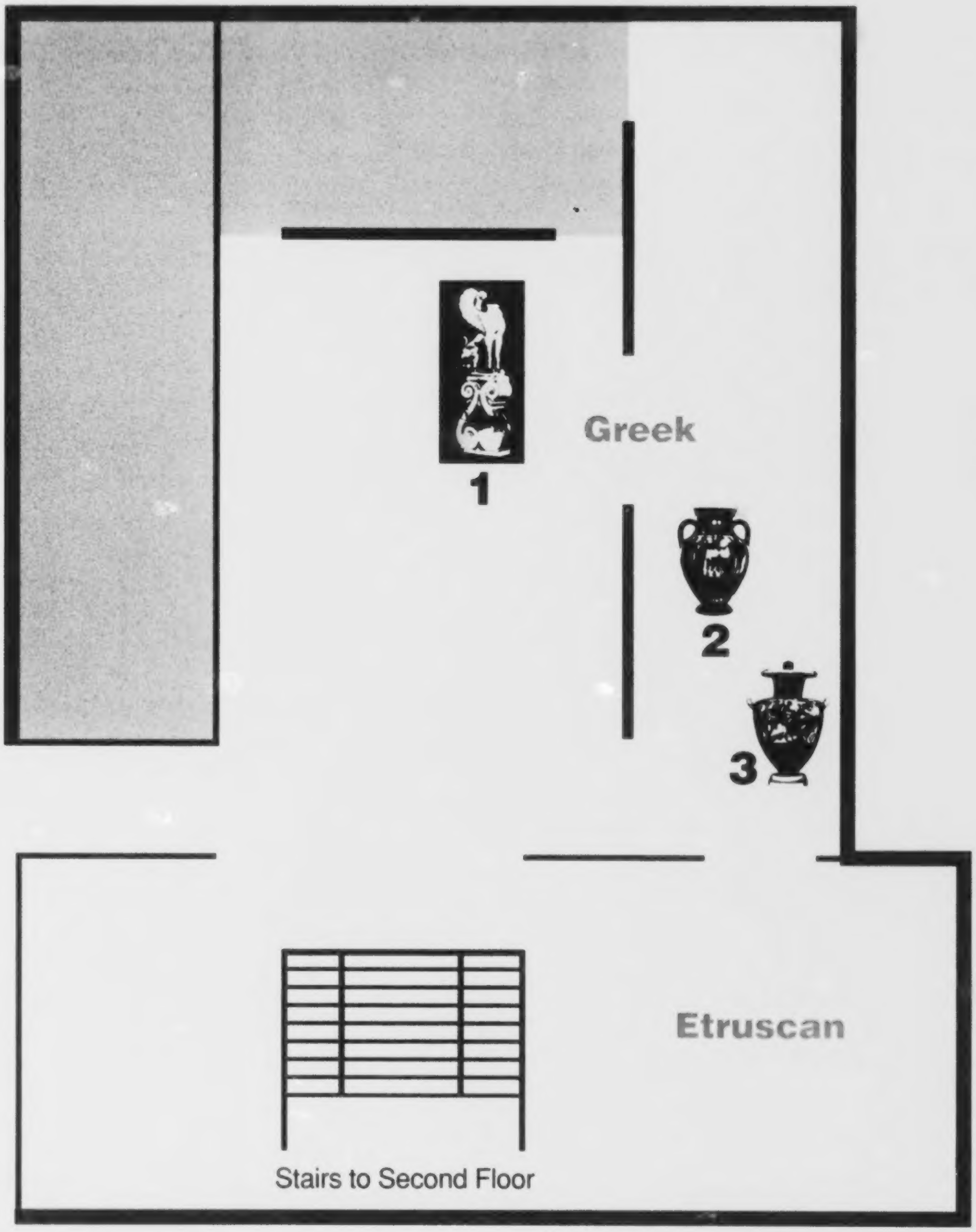
COURTYARD
LOWER ROTUNDA
COURTYARD


1
Greek
2
3
Etruscan
Stairs to Second Floor

First Floor

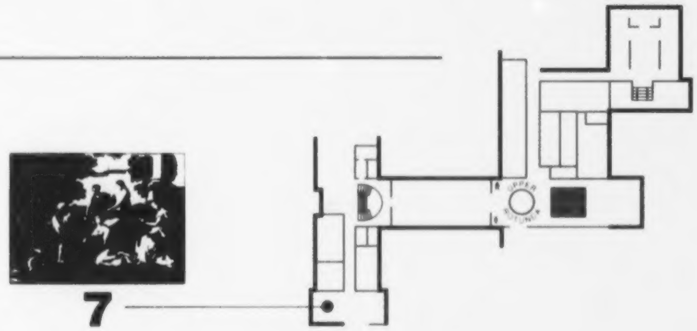
MYTHOLOGY

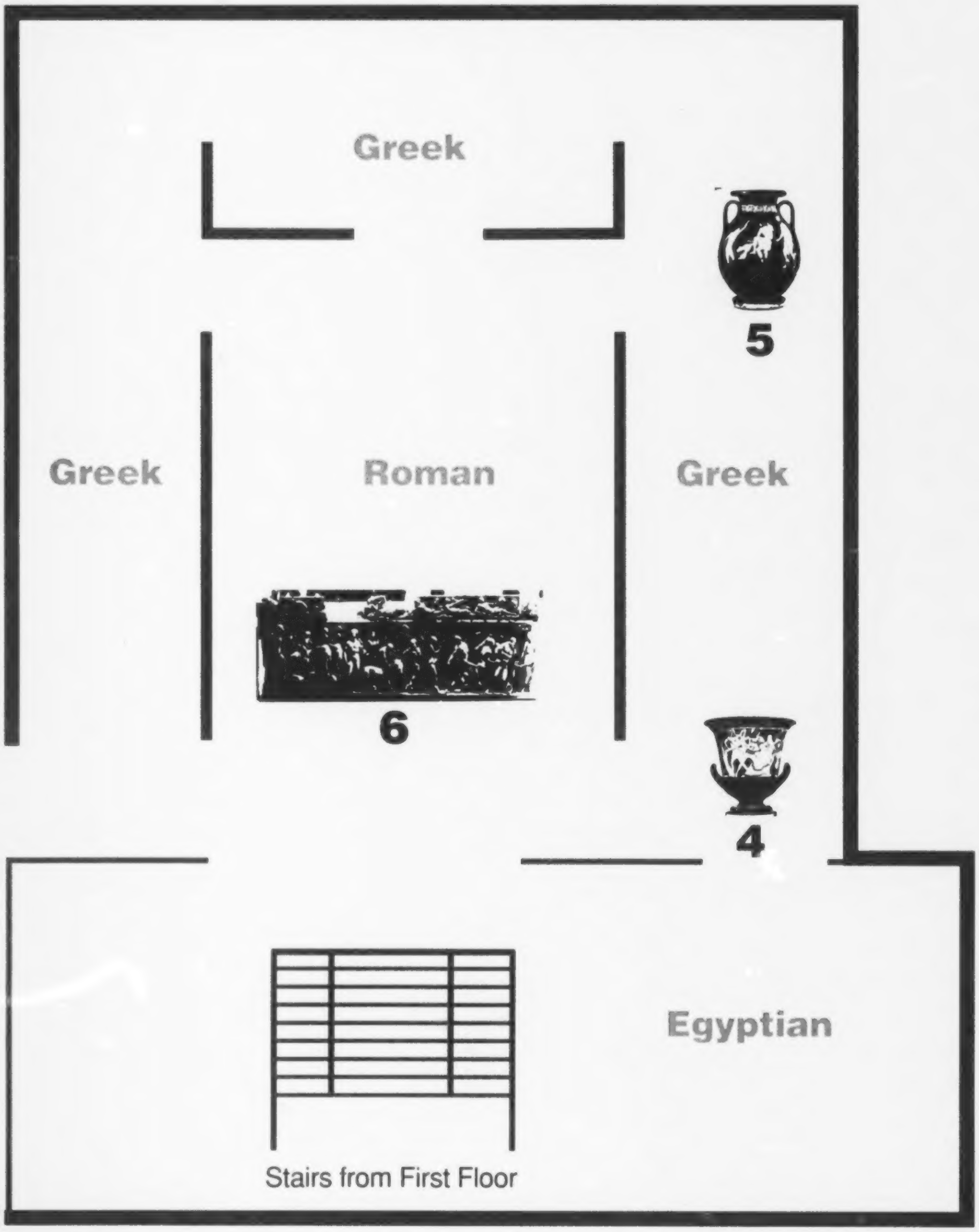
4. Mixing Bowl (Krater)
Scenes from the Fall of Troy

5. Two-handled jar (Pelike)
Odysseus seated on a rock conversing with the shade of Elpenor; at right Hermes

6. Sarcophagus with Triumphal Procession of Dionysos

7. Nicolas Poussin
Discovery of Achilles on Skyros


7
UPPER ROTUNDA


Greek
5
Greek
Roman
Greek
6
4
Egyptian
Stairs from First Floor

Second Floor

POST-VISIT PROJECTS

The Drama of Myth

Introduction

Students will work in small groups to write and present their own dramatic story of a modern-day myth. Their presentations may be in the form of a dramatic production, or reciting the story as Homer would have. Students will be asked to create a myth that takes place in the modern world and that may reveal their thoughts and concerns about a past, current, or future event in their own lives. Teachers may want to introduce or reintroduce students to an ancient Greek play to help guide them in structuring their stories. Students may want to utilize the role of the chorus, or include music and lyrics, masks, etc.

Suggested Materials

Paper, pencils, resource books on the Greek theatre, masks, and stage sets. Teachers may want to preface this project by presenting a short video clip of an ancient Greek drama. They may want to use reference materials, gathering facts and/or ideas to decide on the content and style of their piece. Teachers may want to have a book of Aesop's fables, or a simple storybook of classical myths for students to review.

Suggested Time

If this project is given as a short writing assignment, allow students a week to work out their ideas and then a few days more to create a finished piece. This project could easily be extended for a longer period of time if students create an elaborate design for a fully realized dramatic production. In this case, it may take several weeks.

Suggested Guided Questions

Think about the sort of story you want to tell.
Will your myth be based on another myth or story you know?
Will your characters be of this century or of a time long past?
Do you want this story to have a moral?
Think about the mythical quality of your story. What sort of message will it convey?
Will it be the kind of story to be told for generations?

After each group performance, a discussion period may follow in which students describe how their play evolved, the significance of their invented myths, the choices made in designing their play, etc. It would be helpful for students to get feedback from their audiences as well.

OTHER PRE- AND POST-VISIT PROJECTS

1. Have students research and be prepared to give a short talk on one of the following topics. As you look at works of art in which his/her topic figures, each student will provide the mythological information for the piece.

Achilles
Aphrodite/Venus
Apollo
Athena
Centaurs
Cerberus
Cupid
Dionysos/Bacchus
Herakles
Nike
Polyphemos
Satyrs

2. Design a shield for Hektor or Achilles. Create an original design using the shields seen in the museum as a model. Choose an appropriate motto for your hero's shield.

3. Have students plan and present a tour through the MFA's classical collection for another group of students, based on a previous museum visit and group discussion. To promote each tour topic, students make a class presentation using video, slides, or other media.

4. Create a commercial product based on a character in Greek or Roman mythology. Design an ad campaign to promote this product; this may be presented to the class in written or oral form.

5. Choose a god or goddess, and design a temple for a him/her. Consider location, scale, interior and exterior space. This may be a colored drawing or scale model.

6. Create a design for a mural, frieze, or column based on a passage drawn from one of the classical readings.

7. Collaborate with other students in writing a soap-opera scene based on some historical event or myth.

8. Write or present an imaginary interview with one of the Greek or Roman gods or goddesses.

9. Create your own mythological character or beast. This may begin as an art project (drawing or painting) and evolve into a writing project in which students create a monologue using the voice of this character.

10. Prepare and present a ceremony or feast in honor of one of the gods or heroes.

IMAGES OF POWER

In late twentieth-century America, the "image" that individuals present to the world has become of primary importance. Politicians hire high-priced media consultants, and show-business celebrities undergo various forms of body-altering plastic surgery. The pull of fashion, whether in terms of hair-style, clothes, footgear, or automobiles, affects the consuming public of all ages. Throughout time, people have understood the value of being able to control the image they project, and this is the theme students will explore in this unit. How have different civilizations depicted the ideas or figures of great religious, political, or social power? What choices do artists make in deciding what particular aspect of power to depict? Is military and physical power most important, or spiritual or intellectual power? Or a combination of the two? This unit explores the various ways power has been depicted in the classical world, and encourages students to apply their observations to the world of today.

PRE-VISIT PROJECTS

Looking for Images of Power on Currency

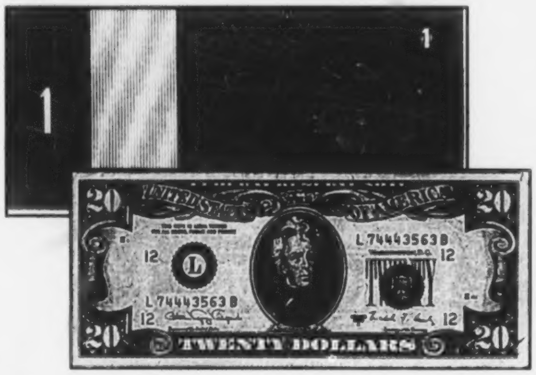
Introduction Have students investigate the images, symbols, and inscriptions on a variety of coins and bills from around the world. They could work in pairs using magnifying glasses, and report their findings to the class.

Suggested Materials Coins and bills from the United States and a variety of other countries, if available; magnifying glasses.

Suggested Time Approximately twenty to thirty minutes.

Suggested Guided Questions

What portraits, inscriptions and symbols can you find on these coins and bills?
What do the symbols stand for?
What do these elements say about this particular culture?
What message do you think this sends to the people who use this money?
How is this like propaganda?
What is a symbol?
What symbols or images can you think of that we use today that represent power?
Where do you see them?



Images of Power:
Selections from the MFA Collection

Before you visit the MFA, familiarize students with some of the objects they will encounter by showing slides in the classroom. (Slides can be borrowed or purchased from the MFA Slide Library; see Appendix, page 8, for further information.) Consider the differences and similarities between the Greek and Roman sculptors and their approach to portraying the human figure. Students will discover that the Greeks emphasized the ideal human figure: youthful face; slim, muscular body; graceful pose. Roman sculptors, while still drawing on the Greek style, were more often interested in conveying a sense of the individual person. Use the following general questions to stimulate discussion; other discussion topics are included in the "MFA Collection" section at the end of this unit.

Suggested Guided Questions

Analyze the clothing, pose, gestures, expression, and any objects included in the portrait, to discover clues to social role.

How has the artist emphasized important elements or characteristics through scale, emphasis of particular details, materials, etc.?

What does the image convey about the individual? Is the emphasis on the subject's social role or on his/her personal characteristics?

MUSEUM VISIT: TEACHER'S GUIDE

Introducing Images of Power

At the MFA, students can directly experience the world of the Greeks and Romans through the works of art they created.

Exploring "Images of Power" at the MFA, students will discover the power of artists to convey ideas about the character and position of the individuals they portrayed. In a time when images were much rarer than they are today, Greek and Roman artists developed their own approaches to creating portraits of powerful individuals. Students will analyze these approaches, and compare the images of power found in the classical world with the powerful images of today.

Developing a Theme

Introduce the theme(s) they will explore, which may include:

- Identifying symbols of power in Greek and Roman art;
- Comparing the more idealized approach to the human figure favored by Greek artists with the more realistic approach of the Romans;
- Considering how the visual elements of an image — the materials used, the scale, the setting, etc. — contribute to our sense of its power.

Finding Your Way

Use the map here to plan your route. When you arrive at your starting point in the classical galleries, begin by orienting your students to the galleries where they will be working. Explain, for instance, the organization of the galleries by country and time period. You could also explain that every object in the galleries is accompanied by a label that provides basic information on the artist, subject matter, date, material, etc.; and gives the object's accession number. The accession number tells you when that object was acquired by the MFA. For example, an object whose accession number is 99.344 was the 344th object to be acquired in 1899.

Choosing Objects

Pick several objects to look at and discuss as a group. Choose these objects from the "MFA Collection" section, or make your own selections. Remember: objects chosen for the "MFA Collection" section are usually on view, but occasionally an object you want to use may be moved or taken off exhibition (for conservation, for a special exhibition at another museum, or for some other reason). During this initial group discussion, model strategies for learning about the classical world through careful looking at works of art. A simple way to begin is to ask students to describe what they see (from the most obvious to the smallest detail) and to build up a body of knowledge about an object through visual analysis. Ask questions that students can answer just by looking, and add additional information at the end. Allow ample time for discussion at each object.

If you have assigned research projects related to specific works of art, have students report on their findings while you are still together as a group.

Discovery Sheets After you have set the stage through group discussion, give students a project they can complete while looking on their own or in small groups. **Discovery sheets** can be developed to help structure this independent work. These sheets should include a variety of questions, and should offer a choice of writing and sketching activities. The information, impressions, and ideas gathered through this museum activity can be used to begin projects to be completed in the classroom. **The following questions and activities offer examples of what a discovery sheet might look like; select the ones that most closely meet your needs, or develop new ones.** Depending on how much time you have, choose two or three sheets included here to photocopy and distribute to your students.

Wrapping Up Set a time and place for your students and chaperons to regroup. Ask students to share some of their discoveries. What did they learn about symbols of power in ancient Greece and Rome? What are comparable symbols of power today?

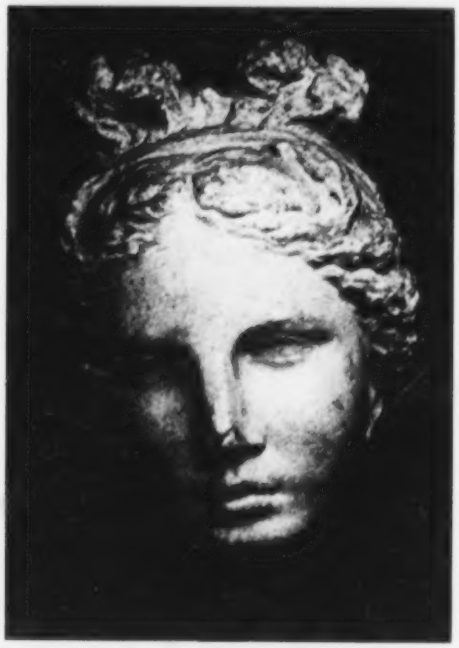
Have fun exploring!

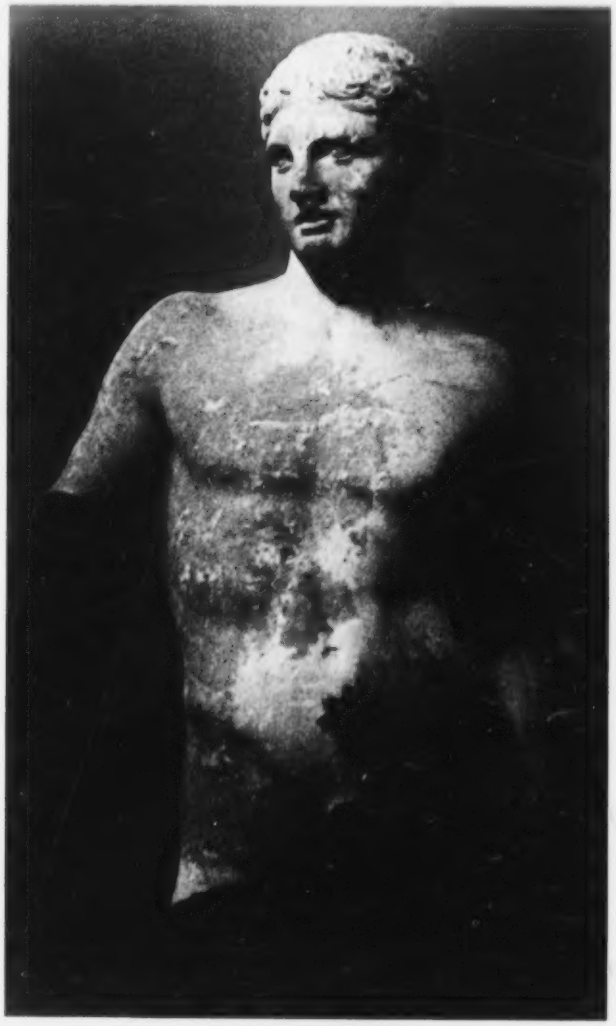
IMAGES OF POWER: FROM THE MFA COLLECTION

1. Snake Goddess
From Crete, late
Minoan I,
1600-1500 B.C.
Ivory and gold

2. Athena Parthenos
(Athena, the Maiden
Goddess)
Roman, Antonine or
Severan Period,
about A.D. 150-230
Reduced copy of an
original by Pheidias,
447-438 B.C.
Marble from Mt.
Pentelikon near
Athens

3. Aphrodite
Greek, Athenian, late
Classical or early
Hellenistic, about
325-300 B.C.
Marble from the
Greek Island of Paros

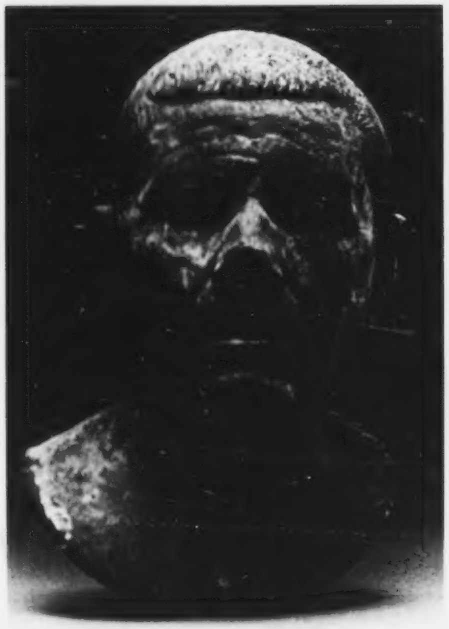




4. Statue of a youth
Greek,
fourth century B.C.
Marble from Mt.
Pentelikon near
Athens

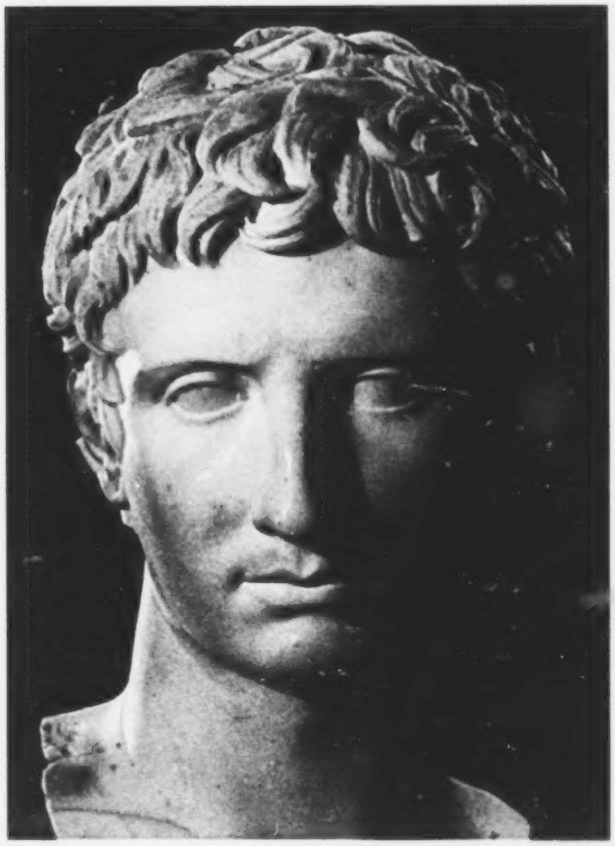
5. Herakles
Roman, first half of the second century A.D. based on a Greek original of the mid-5th century B.C.
Marble

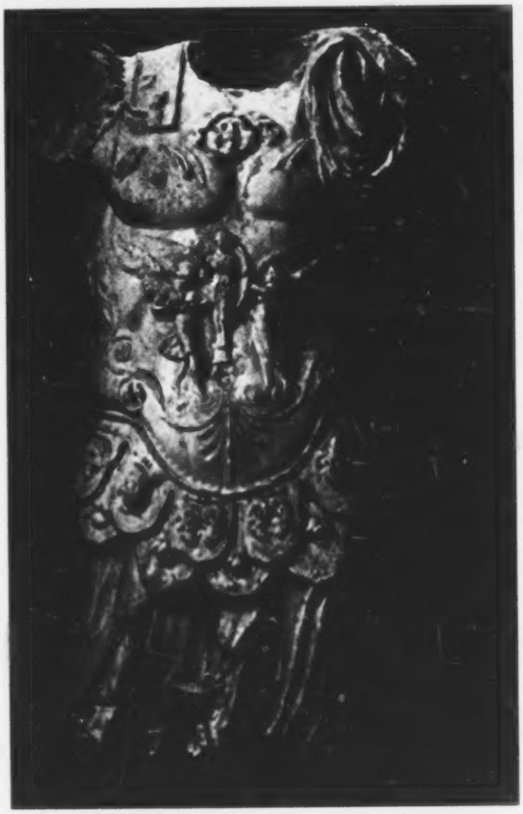
6. Tomb relief of the Publius Gessius Family
Roman, late Republican Period, about 50 B.C.
Found on the Via Cassia near Viterbo
Limestone-like Italian marble



7. Portrait of an old man
Roman, late Republican or early Augustan period, 60-25 B.C.
Marble, probably from a quarry in Greece

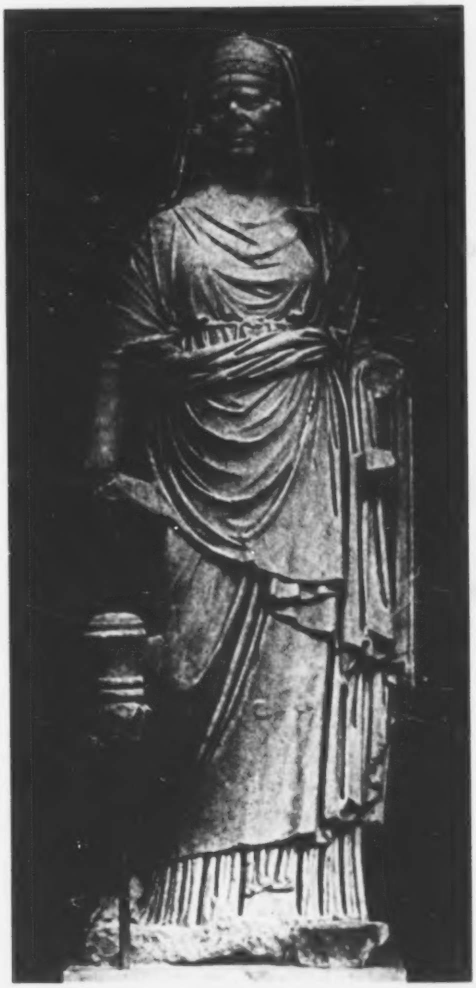
8. Augustus (Emperor 27 B.C.-A.D. 14)
Roman, probably about A.D. 130
Found at Ariccia, near Rome, between 1787 and 1796
Marble

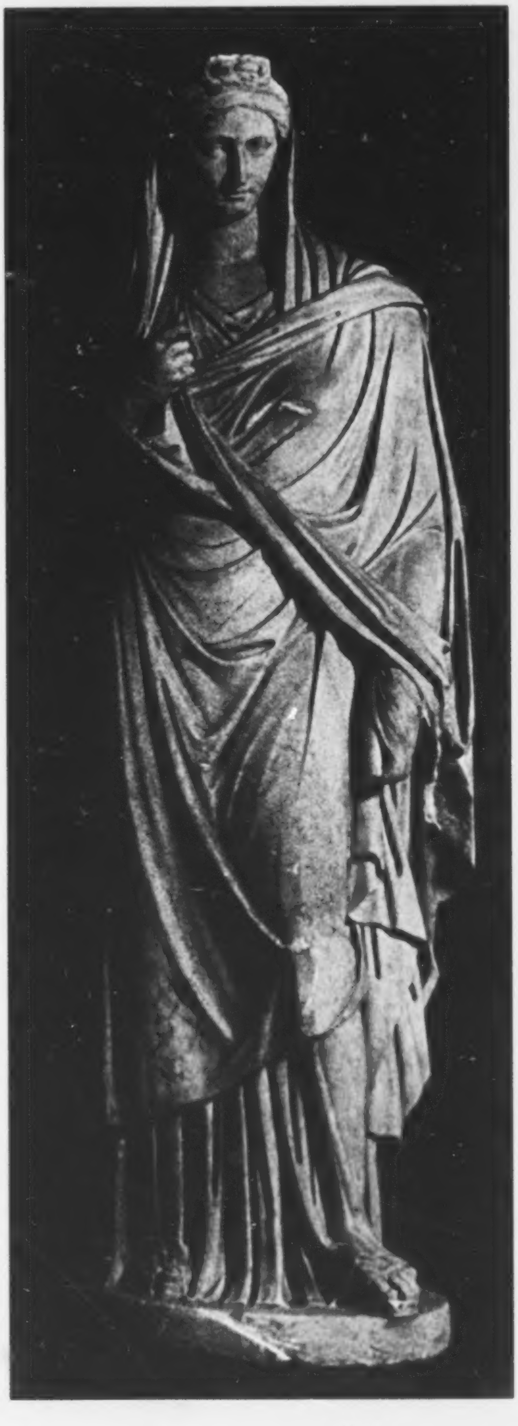




9. Torso clad in a
cuirass, Roman,
about A.D. 90-96
From a statue of the
Emperor Domitian (?)
Marble

10. Statue of an old
woman sacrificing
Roman Imperial,
Hadrianic Period,
about A.D. 125-130
Found at Pozzuoli on
the Bay of Naples
Marble from Greece
or Asia Minor





11. Sabina (wife of Emperor Hadrian)
Roman,
about A.D. 136
Marble

1. Snake Goddess

From Crete, late Minoan I,
1600-1500 B.C.
Ivory and gold
Gift of Mrs. W. Scott Fitz 14.863

This small (about 6 1/2 inches high) figure of the Minoan snake goddess is made of ivory and gold, two very precious materials that would have been imported to the island of Crete from Africa. The goddess stands in a regal pose, with a pair of gold cobras (also native to Africa, not Crete) in her hands. She wears a dress with an open bodice and richly embroidered skirt (clothing typical of the Minoan royal court), and the series of tiny holes around her head indicate that she originally wore a high, crownlike headdress.

The island of Crete was the center of a Bronze Age civilization (about 3000 – 1000 B.C.) called Minoan, after the legendary Cretan king Minos. Predating the civilization founded by the Greeks on the mainland, the Minoan civilization was characterized at its height by large, elaborately decorated palaces like the one at Knossos; very few pieces of sculpture in the round have survived. From what archaeologists can tell about the religion of the Minoans, their central deity was a goddess such as the one depicted in this sculpture. The Snake Goddess was perhaps part of the palace treasury at Knossos, protecting the king's household.

Discussion: How can you tell this was an important figure in Minoan culture (regal pose and dress, precious materials, craftsmanship)? Looking at body language is one of the most common ways we get information about people, both in daily life and in art.

2. Athena Parthenos

(Athena, the Maiden Goddess)
Roman, Antonine or Severan Period, about A.D. 150-230
Reduced copy of an original by Pheidias, 447-438 B.C.
Marble from Mt. Pentelikon near Athens
Classical Department Exchange Fund 1988.196

This is an extremely faithful copy of a well-known statue of Athena which had been made about six hundred years earlier by Phidias, the famed sculptor of the Parthenon frieze. The original stood inside the Parthenon in Athens on Acropolis. (Look for the model of the Acropolis in the gallery near this sculpture, and find the Parthenon.) The figure stood about forty feet high and was made of wood covered with ivory and gold. The patron goddess of Athens, Athena Parthenos stands guard over the city, wearing a helmet and an aegis (goat skin breast-plate) that are elaborately decorated with many mythological creatures (Medusa, sphinx, griffins, Pegasus) symbolizing her power and intelligence. She wears sandals, and her arms (now lost) once held a shield and a spear.

Discussion: Compare similarities and differences (of scale, pose, dress, expression) between this statue and the Minoan snake goddess.

3. Aphrodite

Greek, Athenian, late Classical or early Hellenistic, about 325-300 B.C.
Marble from the Greek island of Paros
Francis Bartlett Fund 03.743

This head of Aphrodite was made to be inserted into a life-size statue probably intended for a religious sanctuary. (Try to imagine what the rest of the statue would have looked like.) The elegant attitude of the head and the subtle way in which the marble was worked suggest that the sculptor was influenced by the greatest Athenian sculptor of the fourth century B.C., Praxiteles. In the fourth century B.C. Greek sculpture took on a softer, more graceful quality, shown here in the gentle incline of the head and the delicacy of Aphrodite's features and expression.

Discussion: Originally, Greek and Roman sculptures were painted naturalistically. How would painting details of the head (eyes, lips, hair) in different colors change the overall effect? Compare with Athena Parthenos. What kind of power does this image of Aphrodite have, and how is it shown?

4. Statue of a youth Greek, fourth century B.C. Marble from Mt. Pentelikon near Athens

H.L. Pierce Fund 04.283

The relaxed young man with the dreamy expression stands with his weight on his left leg in a graceful pose typical of fourth century style. Like most Greek and Roman marble statues, this one would have been brightly painted, adding to the lifelike effect. The statue, which originally marked a tomb, may have commemorated a beloved family member or celebrated a local hero. Because so many surviving tomb markers show individuals in the prime of life, scholars think they were not necessarily intended as realistic portraits of the deceased.

Discussion: What can we tell about how this man wanted to be remembered (age, physical condition) from this sculpture?

5. Herakles Roman, first half of the second century A.D., based on a Greek original of the mid-fifth century B.C. Marble

Francis Bartlett Fund 14.733

Herakles leans wearily on his club, his lion skin hanging limply over his left arm. These two attributes refer to the first of his twelve labors, in which he clubbed the supposedly invincible Nemean lion to death. In his left hand (now lost) he once had a bow. His thick neck and swelling muscles suggest his immense strength. The tree stump and the marble strut attaching the club to the leg indicate that this is a small-scale copy in marble, probably of a large Greek statue of about 450 B.C. (The original, probably made of hollow bronze, would not have required such supports.) The sturdy proportions and realistic details of the body are in the style of Myron, a sculptor of the early fifth century B.C. who created the famous statue of the *Discus Thrower*.

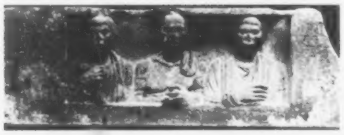
One of the most often depicted heroes in Greek and Roman art, Herakles was the son of Zeus and Alkmene, a mortal woman. Despite the best efforts of Zeus' jealous wife Hera to thwart him, Herakles accomplished superhuman feats throughout his life, and was rewarded after death with immortal life among the gods of Mount Olympus. Look for other representations of Herakles in the galleries. He appears in several different forms in the Hellenistic gallery, including another marble statue of his upper torso (1981.783) and a bronze statue (95.76).

Discussion: Before you identify the sculpture, ask students to see if they can figure out its identity based on the clues provided by the sculptor (lion-skin cloak, club). How is this different from the image of Herakles they already have (from cartoons, etc.)? What moment is shown? By showing Herakles at rest, the artist has allowed the viewer to think about all of his many exploits instead of just one.

6. Tomb relief of the Publius Gessius Family

Roman, late Republican Period, about 50 B.C.
Found on the Via Cassia near Viterbo
Limestone-like Italian Marble
Archibald Cary Coolidge Fund
37.100

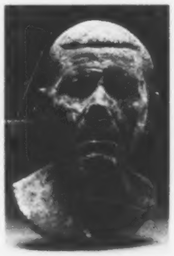
Carved in relief, this tomb marker shows three members of an average family of the Roman Republic: Publius Gessius, flanked by his wife Fausta on the left and their son Primus on the right. From the clothing Publius Gessius wears (tunic, leather armor, sword belt and cloak), the ring on his finger, and sword hilt in his left hand, we can guess he probably spent his life in the military. The Latin inscriptions tell us that both his wife and his son had once been his slaves and had been freed by him, and that Gessia Fausta, the last surviving member of the family, supervised the building of the tomb with funds provided in the will of her husband. The tomb was situated along one of the roads leading into the town of Viterbo.



Discussion: Compare the Roman figure of Primus with the Greek statue of a youth which also marked a tomb. Who is more recognizable as an individual? Greek artists were interested in representing the ideal human form, but many Roman Republican artists were careful to depict individuals accurately with little attempt to flatter the sitters. Look for family resemblance among the three members of the Gessius family.

7. Portrait of an old man

Roman, late Republican or early Augustan period, 60-25 B.C.
Marble, probably from a quarry in Greece
Frank B. Bemis Fund and bequest of Benjamin Rowland, Jr., gift of Dana Estes, and gift of Paul E. Manheim, by exchange
1991.534



Though the actual name of this citizen of the Roman Republic is unknown, he was certainly identifiable in his own time. This straightforward, uncompromising approach was in keeping with the Roman civic spirit, which venerated achievements in establishing political freedom. This portrait was probably made as a memorial image of an ancestor, and would have been kept in a special place in the home alone with images of other ancestors.

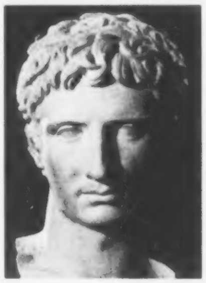
Discussion: How do we capture the likenesses of family members today, and where do we keep them? In what ways are some more formal than others?

8. Augustus (Emperor 27 B.C.-A.D. 14)

Roman, probably about A.D. 130
Found at Ariccia, near Rome, between 1787 and 1796
Marble
H.L. Pierce Fund 99.344

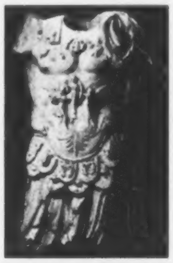
This portrait of the first Roman emperor, Augustus, was carved over a hundred years after his death, during the reign of Hadrian. This head was probably made to be inserted into a life-size standing statue that might have stood in an imperial villa. An idealized posthumous portrait of Augustus, it represents him less as a man of great political power than as an embodiment of divine beauty. (In the galleries there are several other portraits of Augustus that show him in a more realistic way.)

Discussion: This idealized portrait of the first emperor of Rome shows a later generation looking back nostalgically to the Empire's "golden age." Are there periods or figures from American history that have been later idealized?



9. Torso clad in a cuirass

Roman,
about A.D. 90-96
From a statue of the Emperor Domitian (?)
Marble
H.L. Pierce Fund 99.346



The torso is thought to be part of a statue of Domitian, emperor from A.D. 81 to 96. Statues like this, demonstrating the power and prestige of the emperor, were placed in public buildings throughout the Roman Empire. Domitian stands dressed as a military leader, with the weight on his left leg, his right arm raised and probably holding a spear or a scepter, and his left arm lowered, with a small sheathed sword resting against the upper arm. He wears a short tunic (see upper arm), a metal cuirass with leather lining, and a military cloak over his shoulder and left arm. The cuirass is richly decorated with symbols of power. At the center stands Athena, goddess of war, flanked by dancing personifications of victory. This image of Athena represents a specific statuette known as the "Palladion," which in the *Iliad* was stolen from Troy by Odysseus and Diomedes. Only after this image was taken could the Greeks conquer Troy. Some believed that the Palladion was never stolen by the Greeks, and that instead it was brought to Rome by Aeneas. The Palladion therefore became the symbol and guarantee of Rome's invincibility.

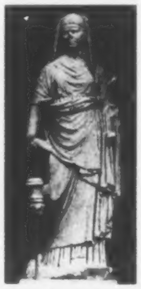
Other symbolic motifs on the front include two ram's heads, a winged Gorgoneion, a head of Pan, an elephant's head, a lion's head and scalp, and a crested helmet.

Discussion: Consider why a Roman emperor would use symbols from Greek mythology. (In addition to being the goddess associated with war in general, Athena also protected individual heroes. She helped Perseus kill Medusa, and she championed Odysseus through the *Odyssey*.) What symbols would you choose to decorate armor in another period (like America in the time of the revolution) or today? In the galleries, look for the coin that carries Domitian's portrait (no. 12 in the wall case, 68.613).

10. Statue of an old woman sacrificing

Roman Imperial, Hadrianic Period,
about A.D. 125-130
Found at Pozzuoli on the Bay of Naples
Marble from Greece or Asia Minor
Francis Bartlett Fund 34.113

Dressed as a priestess, this older woman is performing a sacrifice. Her left hand, (now missing), held a box from which with her right hand (also gone) she was sprinkling grains of incense on a small cylindrical altar or incense burner, part of which remains at her right side. She wears a long tunic, a mantle that she has draped over her head, and thick soled sandals. The five heavy braids coiled around her head, a hairstyle fashionable in the time of Hadrian, helps to determine the date of the statue.

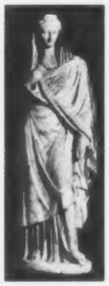


In ancient Greece, sculptors were forbidden to portray women of status as anything but young; only servants could be portrayed with the wrinkles and cropped hair that signified older women in ancient Greece. In Rome, the experience and wisdom that came with age was more highly valued, and so more frequently portrayed in art.

Discussion: What does this tell us about the role of women in the Roman Empire? Compare with the role of women who are prominent in public life today.

11. Sabina (wife of Emperor Hadrian)

Roman,
about A.D. 136
Marble
Classical Department Exchange Fund 1979.556



This portrait of Sabina was based on actual observation of the Empress but was made about a year after her death. In commissioning this larger-than-life statue of his wife for a public monument, the emperor Hadrian elevated her to the rank of goddess. Her head is downcast and she appears to be in a solemn mood. Her hair is wound in a coil around her head with an elaborate knot at the front. She is wearing a long tunic; her head and shoulders are amply covered by a large himation (cloak).

In the gallery, look for the coin with a portrait of Sabina, and compare it with this sculpture.

Discussion: Though Roman sculptors were more interested than their Greek counterparts in presenting accurate portraits of individuals, they were well aware of techniques used by the Greek to present sitters in a more flattering light. Compare this statue of Sabina with the statue of the old woman sacrificing. Which aspects of each seem realistic? Idealistic?

MUSEUM DISCOVERY SHEET

Looking at the Greeks and Romans

Look for the sculpted head of Aphrodite ("The Bartlett Head").

Who was this goddess, and what was she known for?……………………………

……………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………

Based on what you know about Aphrodite, how does the sculpture seem to reflect the characteristics of this goddess?……………………………

……………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………

Now look for the sculpted head of Marciana.

How would you describe this woman by looking at her portrait?……………………

……………………………………………………………………

Compare this Roman woman with the Greek head of Aphrodite.

How are they similar?……………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………

How are they different?……………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………

Find the marble sculpture titled *Portrait of a man*. This work was probably intended as a memorial image of an ancestor in a Roman villa.

What do you imagine he might be looking at or thinking about in this moment?....

……………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………

Describe this character as you see him……………………………………

……………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………

What has the sculptor done to give you this impression of his character?

....

....

In the adjacent gallery you will find a group of works categorized as Hellenistic Art. Many of the portrait busts on view here are of poets, philosophers, and historical figures. The Romans liked to display portraits like these in their libraries and hallways at home.

What impression would a display of portraits of famous men make on visitors to a Roman house? ....

....

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....

Why do you imagine they would want these particular figures in their homes?.......

....

....

....

How would you describe the differences between these sculptures and the other Greek and Roman sculptures?...

....

....

....

If you could have portraits of different people in your house, who would they be, and why?...

....

....

....

....

Where would you put them?...

....

....

Looking at Portraits: What makes an image powerful?

Locate the three busts of Augustus in this room and sketch each quickly in the boxes below.

1 2 3

Describe the material used for each. List three adjectives to describe each one.

Material:	....	....	....
Adjectives:	....	....	....
	....	....	....
	....	....	....

What are the differences in the way each sculptor has depicted Augustus?............

....

....

What are the similarities in the way each sculptor has depicted Augustus?..............

....

....

....

Based on your analysis of the three portraits, what do you think is most important about Augustus?..

....

MUSEUM DISCOVERY SHEET

It's a miracle! All the sculptors who carved the portraits now on view in the "Roman Court" (whose identities we don't know— you'll notice there are no names on the object labels) are back, looking for one more commission from a present-day public figure. If you were to put yourself in the shoes of the celebrity of your choice, which sculptor would you choose to capture your image for posterity?

....

Price is no object (they're all charging the same exorbitant amount), so base your decision simply on the visual impact of the portraits around you. What are your reasons for your choice?..

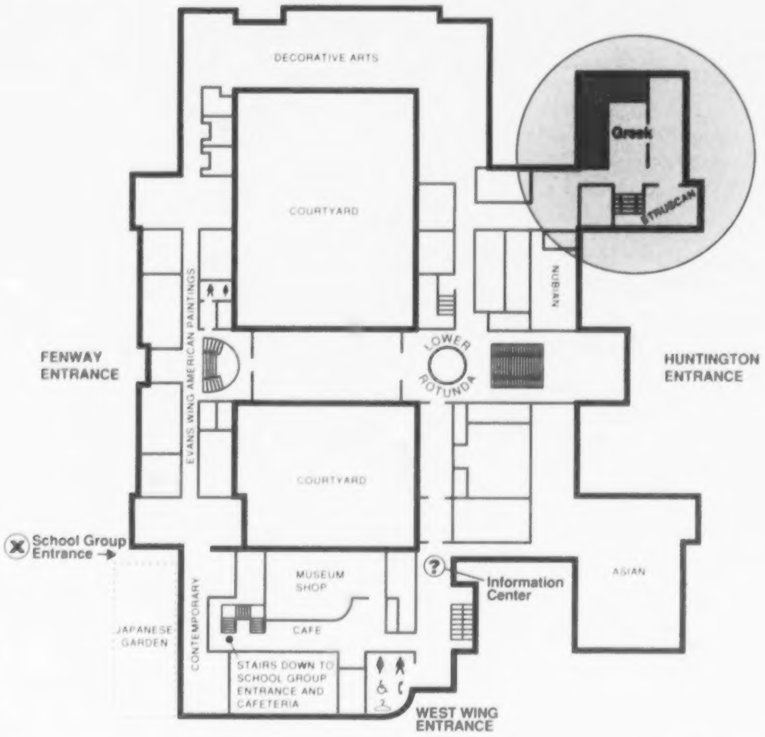
....

....

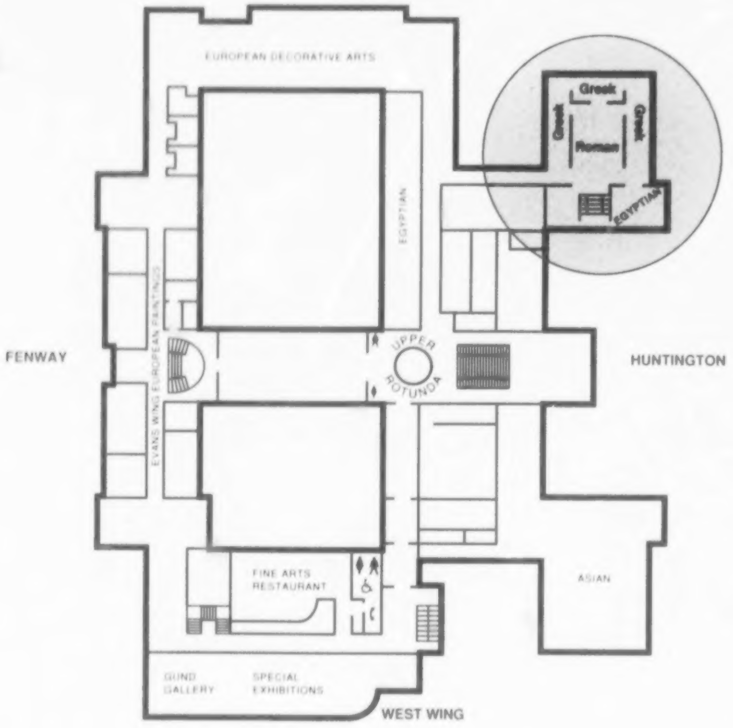
Below is an order form for the artist's commission. You will need to describe for the artist just what kind of portrait you have in mind. Please include specific information about size; material; personal details of face, hairstyle, and clothing; and any other pertinent suggestions:

Name of celebrity:..
Sculptor of the portrait of:...
Size:...
Material:..
Location of sculpture:...
Purpose of sculpture:..
....
....
....
....
....
....

MAPS TO GALLERIES


DECORATIVE ARTS
Greek
ETRUSCAN
COURTYARD
NUBIAN
EVANS WING AMERICAN PAINTINGS
FENWAY ENTRANCE
LOWER ROTUNDA
HUNTINGTON ENTRANCE
COURTYARD
School Group Entrance →
MUSEUM SHOP
Information Center
ASIAN
JAPANESE GARDEN
CONTEMPORARY
CAFE
STAIRS DOWN TO SCHOOL GROUP ENTRANCE AND CAFETERIA
WEST WING ENTRANCE

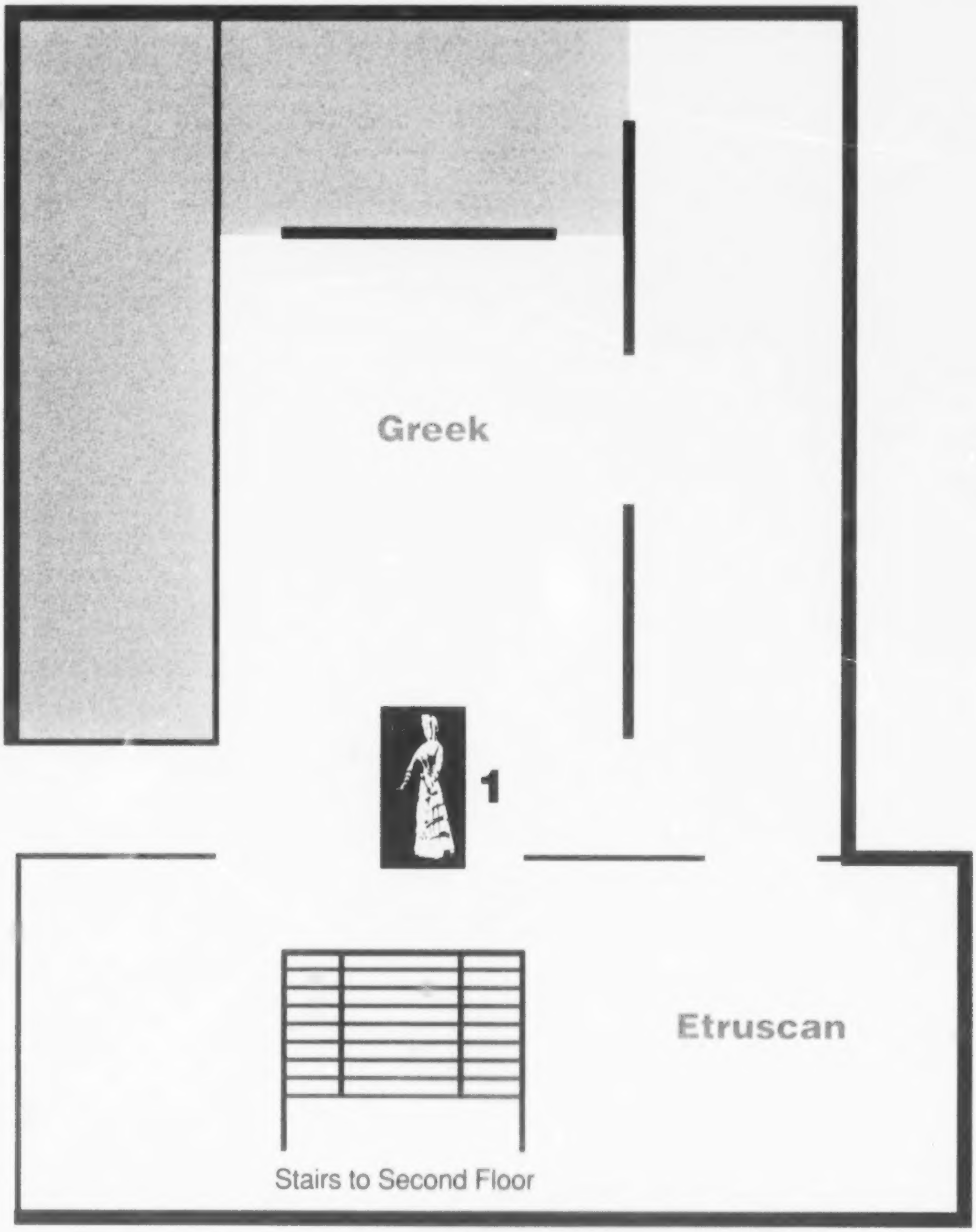
First Floor


EUROPEAN DECORATIVE ARTS
Greek
Greek
Greek
Roman
EGYPTIAN
EGYPTIAN
FENWAY
EVANS WING EUROPEAN PAINTINGS
UPPER ROTUNDA
HUNTINGTON
FINE ARTS RESTAURANT
ASIAN
GUND GALLERY
SPECIAL EXHIBITIONS
WEST WING

Second Floor

IMAGES OF POWER

1. Snake Goddess
From Crete, late
Minoan I,
1600-1500 B.C.
Ivory and gold


Greek
1
Etruscan
Stairs to Second Floor

First Floor

IMAGES OF POWER

2. Athena Parthenos (Athena, the Maiden Goddess)

3. Aphrodite

4. Statue of a youth

5. Herakles

6. Tomb relief of the Publius Gessius family

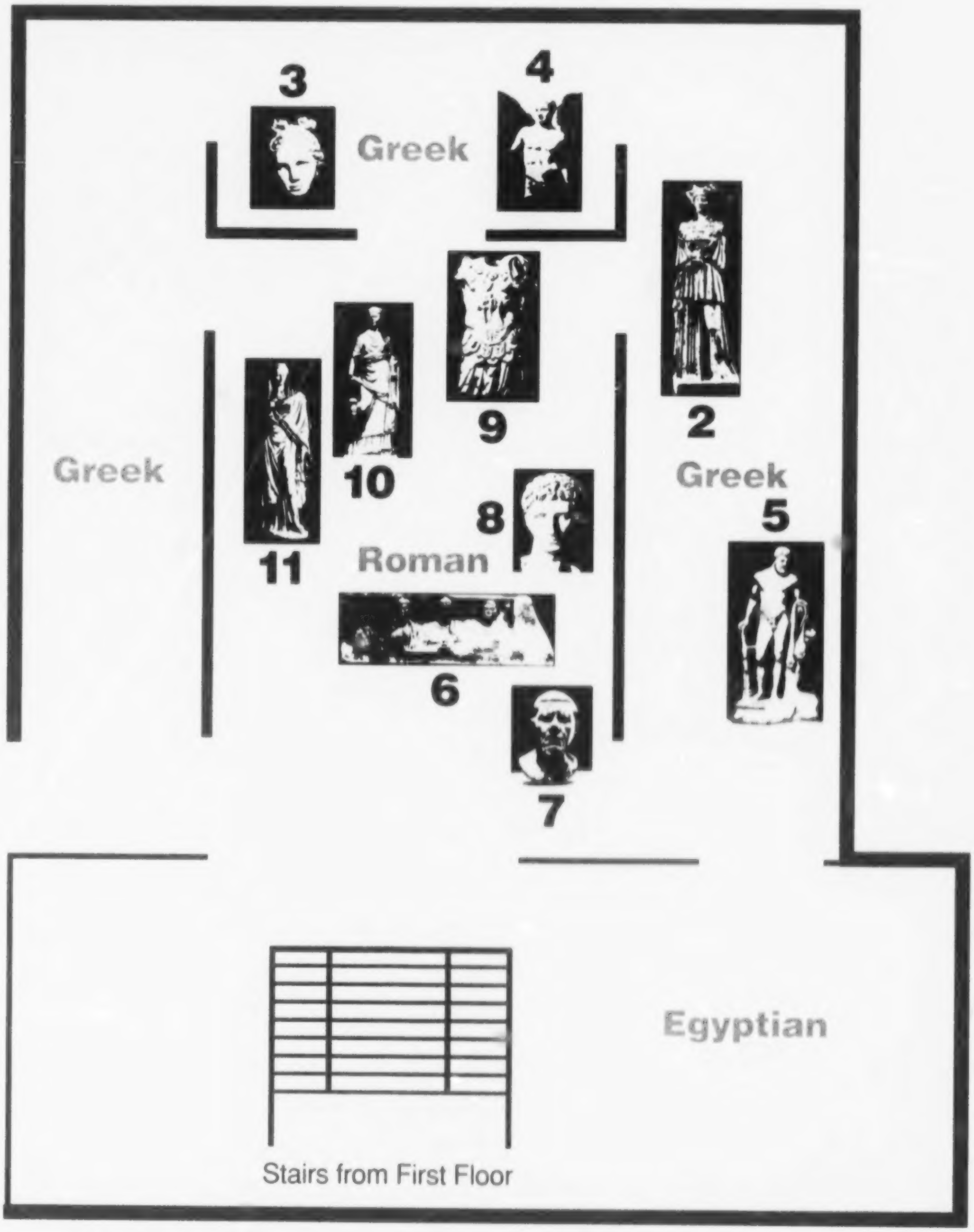
7. Portrait of an old man

8. Augustus

9. Torso clad in a cuirass

10. Statue of an old woman sacrificing

11. Sabina


3
4
Greek
9
2
Greek
10
8
5
Greek
11
Roman
6
7
Egyptian
Stairs from First Floor

Second Floor

POST-VISIT PROJECTS

The Media: Creating Images of Power

Group Investigation Divide the class into small groups and ask each group to bring in photographs of current world leaders from newspapers and magazines, or to notice how political figures are shown on television news. Ask students to take note of the activities the leaders are engaged in, how are they dressed, and what objects (flags, books, desks, etc.) accompany them. Students may be given a few days to search for and collect these materials and to record their findings in written form. As a group they will discuss their impressions of these photographs and consider the function and impact of the media in reporting events to the public. They will offer opinions about the intentions of the media and discuss how fair or unfair the documentation is of these events. Students may speculate on the degree of deception or distortion involved in these reports.

Group Presentation Each group will present their findings and opinions to the class, with a question and answer session following which invites other comments and opinions from the rest of the class.

Becoming an Image of Power

Introduction Students will develop a presentation based on an important public figure from the past. This could take the form of a performance or a video recording. Students should research this personality using a variety of resource materials: books, films, portraits, etc. They will need time to write drafts of their speeches, to develop the right tone of voice and timing for their speech, and to design their costumes and makeup, if necessary.

Suggested Guided Questions Think of a particular person from this time in history who interests you strongly and consider the following:

What was this person like?
What was his/her contribution to society?
What kind of power did s/he have?
How was that power portrayed in his/her lifetime?
How do you want this person to be portrayed in your presentation?
Is there an interesting or amusing story about this person?
What sort of language will s/he use?
What tone of voice will s/he have?
What message will s/he have for the class?
How will you become this person visually?
How will you look? Will you wear some kind of special clothing or makeup?
What other objects will you carry or include in the background?

Follow performances with a class discussion.

OTHER PRE- AND POST-VISIT PROJECTS

1. Research (use at least two sources) one of the following individuals whose image can be found (in sculpture or on coins) in the MFA. Write a paragraph explaining what he did, a paragraph about the contribution he made to society, and a paragraph explaining what lesson he teaches us today. Include a bibliography and illustrations (optional).

Greece	*Rome*
Alexander the Great	Augustus Caesar
Homer	Constantine I
Socrates	Domitian
	Julius Caesar

2. Research and analyze the media accounts of a historical figure. Divide the class and have half research "positive" media accounts while half research "negative" accounts. What impressions did the public have of this person? How were these impressions generated? Based on fact or fabrication ? What are the results overall?

3. Imagine you are the media advisor for the president of the United States or another world leader, and design a TV presentation or photographs for a magazine article that would enhance the image of his or her power.

4. Write a speech designed for a political candidate's first public speaking engagement. Issues to be considered include: the importance and purpose of the speech, its content and tone, the audience to be addressed, etc.

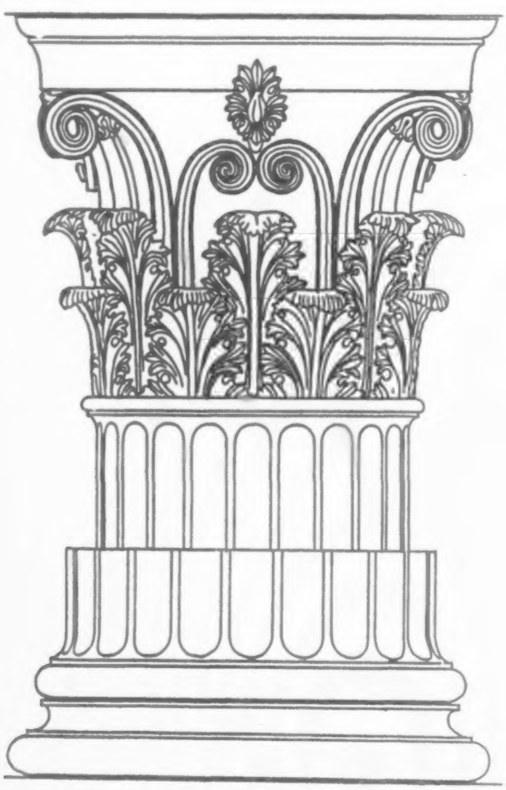
5. Develop a media campaign for candidates running for school office, a band, a movie star, a sports figure, etc. Consider designing posters, writing articles, giving press conferences, creating TV and radio spots to promote this individual or group to the public.

6. Design a coin based on an important historical figure from ancient Greece or Rome (or from the United States). These could be large-scale models about a foot in diameter made from cardboard, foamcore, wood, or any material of your choice. Pieces may be painted or collaged with words and images. (This project may follow the pre-visit activity in which the class investigates the images and inscriptions on world currencies.)

ECHOES OF ANTIQUITY

Throughout the ages, from medieval to modern times, artists, architects, and sculptors have looked to the arts of the ancient Greeks and Romans for inspiration. At the MFA, students will walk back through time to discover the architecture of the classical age — its particular structures, materials, and decorative elements. They will then explore their own community to find many of the same classical motifs within the walls and buildings in their neighborhoods, opening their eyes to classical architectural forms that can be found in public buildings and private houses today.

Students will examine the interior and exterior of the MFA, the murals John Singer Sargent designed for the Rotunda ceiling, and the American neoclassical period rooms. For one project students will become architects and design their own structure — either a public or private place — using classical motifs.

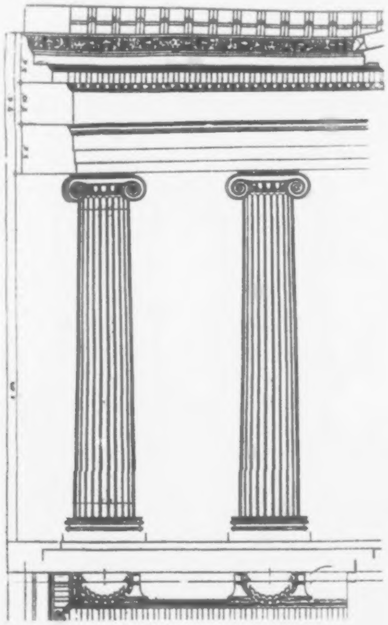


PRE-VISIT PROJECTS

Architecture of Greece and Rome

Using slides or book illustrations, show students examples of Greek and Roman architecture, focusing on prominent buildings in Athens and Rome. Compare, for instance, three temples built on the Acropolis in the fifth century B.C. (the Parthenon, the Temple of Athena Nike, and the Erectheion) with the Pantheon, which was built in the second century A.D. The Greeks designed buildings using the post-and-lintel system, developing building types and architectural decoration that continue to be used today. The builders of Greek temples carefully considered the proportions and decoration of exteriors, since most religious ceremonies were performed at altars outside the temples. The Romans borrowed the Greek style of building, adding their own variations and creating new combinations with the help of a structural innovation, the arch. Using this new structural technology in combination with a new building material, concrete, the Romans created impressively domed and vaulted interior spaces. Use the illustrations on pages 5-6 to familiarize students with classical architectural terms.

Greek and Roman buildings inspired later artists and architects, especially during the Renaissance (fifteenth and sixteenth centuries), the neoclassical period (late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries), and the Greek Revival period in America (1820s to 1850s). While some nineteenth-century American artists and architects traveled to Europe to see ancient ruins for themselves, most got their information about the architecture of Greece and Rome from drawings in handbooks like *The Antiquities of Athens, Measured and Delineated* by James Stuart and Nicholas Revett, published in London around 1825. The detailed drawings in these handbooks provided a rich resource for American architects.



The Design of Your School Building: A Closer Look

Introduction Take your students on a walk around the outside of your school, exploring its setting, entrance, windows, etc. Then go inside to look at classrooms, the main lobby, the library, and other interior spaces. Explain that every detail of the building — from the type of brick or stone used on the outside to the doorknobs inside — was chosen by an architect, in consultation with the client (in this case, the school). Students will look at different parts of the building (classrooms, gym, offices), discussing how the materials, lighting, and proportions of different spaces create different atmospheres.

Suggested Time One class session

Suggested Guided Questions Note the type, color, and texture of the materials used (for floors, walls, and ceilings), the architectural details, and the sense of space and lighting (natural or artificial).

How do these elements reflect the particular function of each area? For example, how is the main lobby different from the library or cafeteria?

Discuss the exterior of the building. What message does the overall look of the building send? (If your building includes any classical motifs, be sure to point them out.)

If you were an architect commissioned to redesign the school, what changes would you make?

Get Inspired: Design Your Own Building

Introduction Students will design a special place for either public or private use that includes at least one classical motif. This design can take the form of a freehand drawing, a collage, or a written description. Begin by asking students to find a building in the neighborhood that includes one or more classical motifs (photocopy the sheets included here or develop your own to help students identify motifs) and have them sketch it or write a description of it. Then ask them to use the classical motifs they have already found to create their own building.

Suggested Materials Paper, pencils, colored pencils, rulers, magazines

Suggested Time One to three class periods

Suggested Guided Questions Make a list of public and private places. What are the special characteristics of each (for example, places where you go to see other people versus places you go when you want to be alone)?

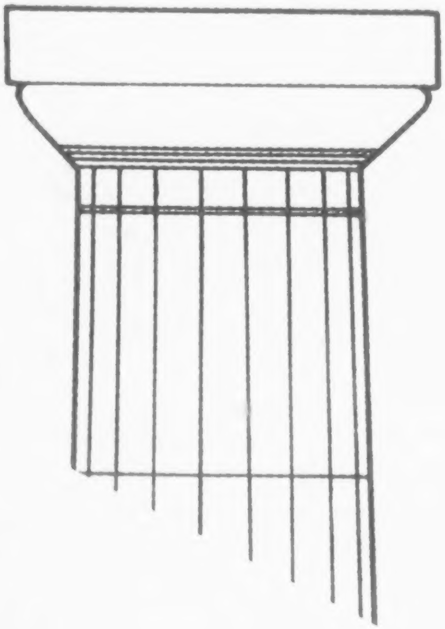
If you could design a private or public space, what sort of place would it be? Think about what kind of materials, light, color, sound, etc., your space would have.

How will your space relate to its purpose?

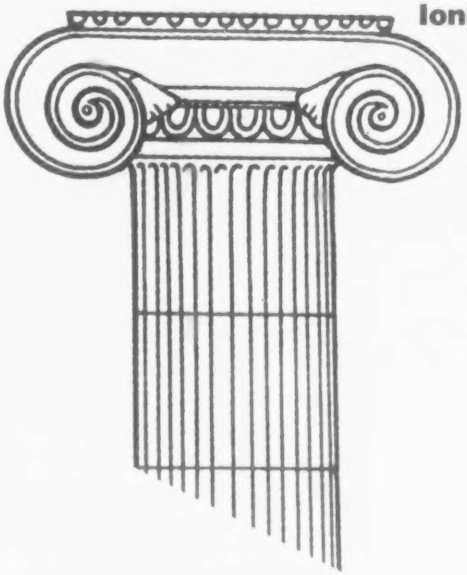
Which of the classical architectural motifs we have looked at will be most effective in your design?

Afterwards, have students present their ideas to the class, discussing why they chose their particular classical motifs.

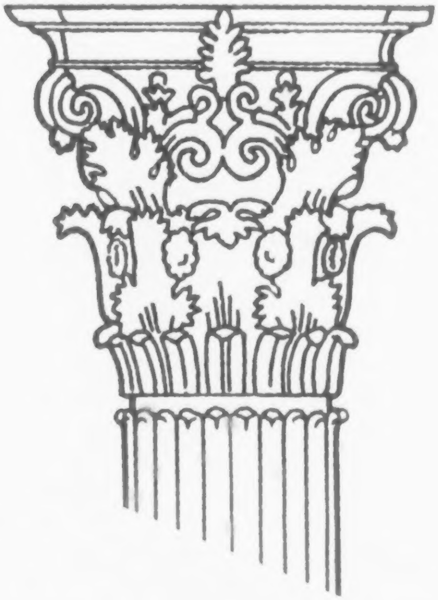
PRE-VISIT PROJECTS: CLASSICAL MOTIFS



Doric

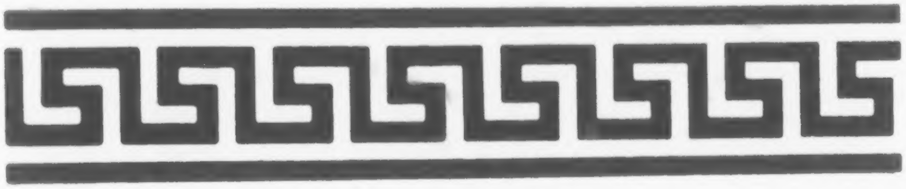


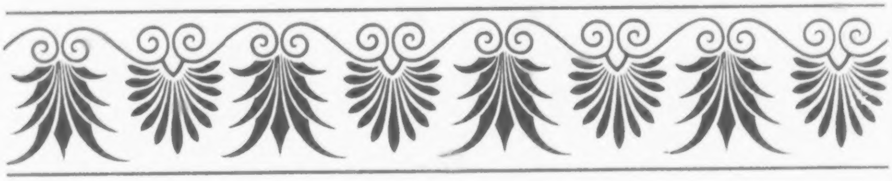
Ionic

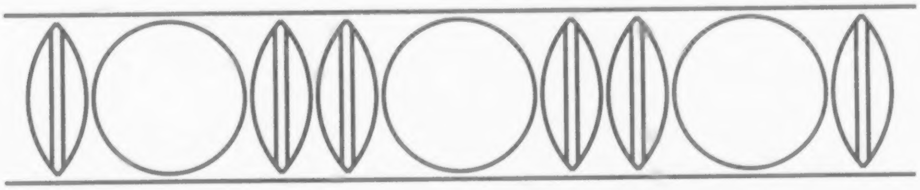


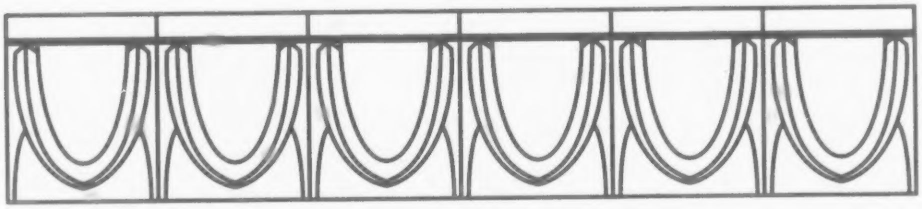
Corinthian

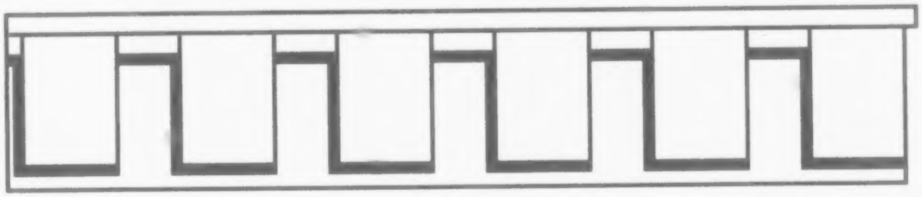
PRE-VISIT PROJECTS: CLASSICAL MOTIFS


Meander


Lotus and Palmette


Bead and Reel


Egg and Tongue


Dentil

MUSEUM VISIT: TEACHER'S GUIDE

Introducing Echoes of Antiquity

At the MFA, students can directly experience the world of the Greeks and Romans through the works of art they created. In this visit, they will also see examples of classical influence on American architecture by analyzing the Museum building itself.

"Echoes of Antiquity" introduces students to the vocabulary of classical architecture. Students will spend time looking at and discussing the outside of the Museum building, noting the different uses of classical elements on its three major sides (even I. M. Pei's West Wing entrance has a column). They will look for additional signs of classical influence on the building's interior and in the American neoclassical period rooms, and consider why classical architecture is still so influential.

Developing a Theme

Introduce the theme(s) they will explore, which may include:

- Recognizing and identifying classical architectural motifs on the exterior and in the interior of the Museum building;
- Understanding why artists and architects have continued to borrow the architectural forms of the Greeks and Romans, especially in America;
- Analyzing the architecture of different Museum spaces to understand how architects use visual elements (materials, lighting, proportions, etc.) to create specific effects.

Finding Your Way

When you finally arrive at your starting point inside the Museum, begin by orienting your students to the galleries where they will be working. Explain, for instance, the organization of the galleries by country and time period. You could also explain that every object in the galleries is accompanied by a label that provides basic information about the artist, subject matter, date, material, etc.; and gives the object's accession number. The accession number tells you when that object was acquired by the MFA. For example, an object whose accession number is 99.344 was the 344th object to be acquired in 1899.

Pick several objects to look at and discuss as a group. Choose these objects from the "MFA Collection" section, or make your own selections. Remember: objects chosen for the "MFA Collection" section are usually on view, but occasionally an object you want to use may be moved or taken off exhibition (for conservation, for a special exhibition at another museum, or for some other reason). During this initial group discussion, model strategies for learning about the classical world through careful looking at architecture and works of art. A simple way to begin is to ask students to describe what they see (from the most obvious to the smallest detail) and to build up a body of knowledge about an object through visual analysis. Ask questions that students can answer just by looking, and add additional information at the end. Allow ample time for discussion of each object.

If you have assigned research projects related to specific works of art, have students report on their findings while you are still together as a group.

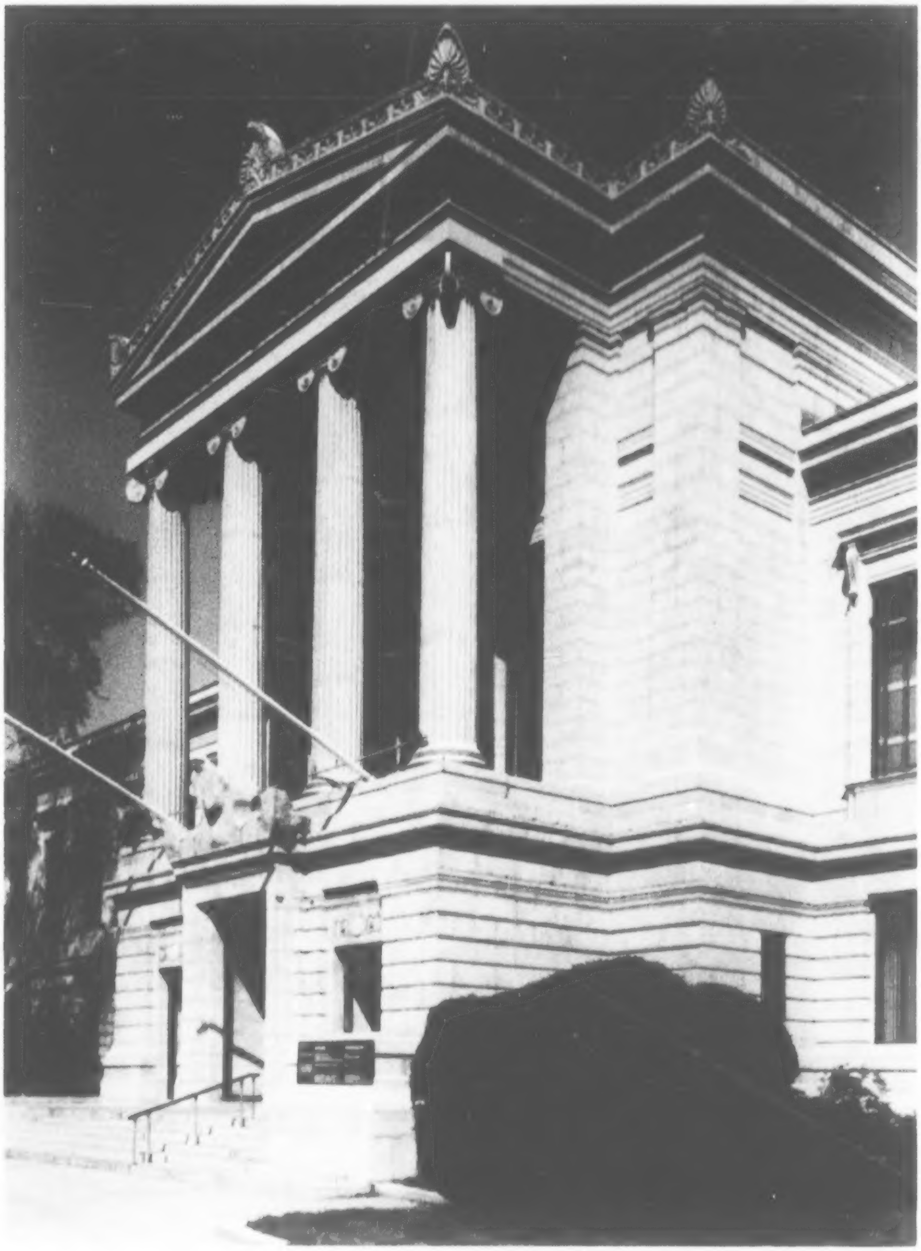
Discovery Sheets

After you have set the stage through group discussion, give students a project they can complete while looking on their own or in small groups. **Discovery sheets** can be developed to help structure this independent work. These sheets should include a variety of questions, and should offer a choice of writing and sketching activities. The information, impressions, and ideas gathered through this Museum activity can be used to begin projects to be completed in the classroom. **The following questions and activities offer examples of what a discovery sheet might look like; select the ones that most closely meet your needs, or develop new ones.** Depending on how much time you have, choose two or three sheets to photocopy and distribute to your students.

Wrapping Up

Set a time and place for your students and chaperons to regroup. Ask students to share some of their discoveries. What did they learn about the use of classical architecture in nineteenth-and twentieth century America? Why do architects continue to use these forms?

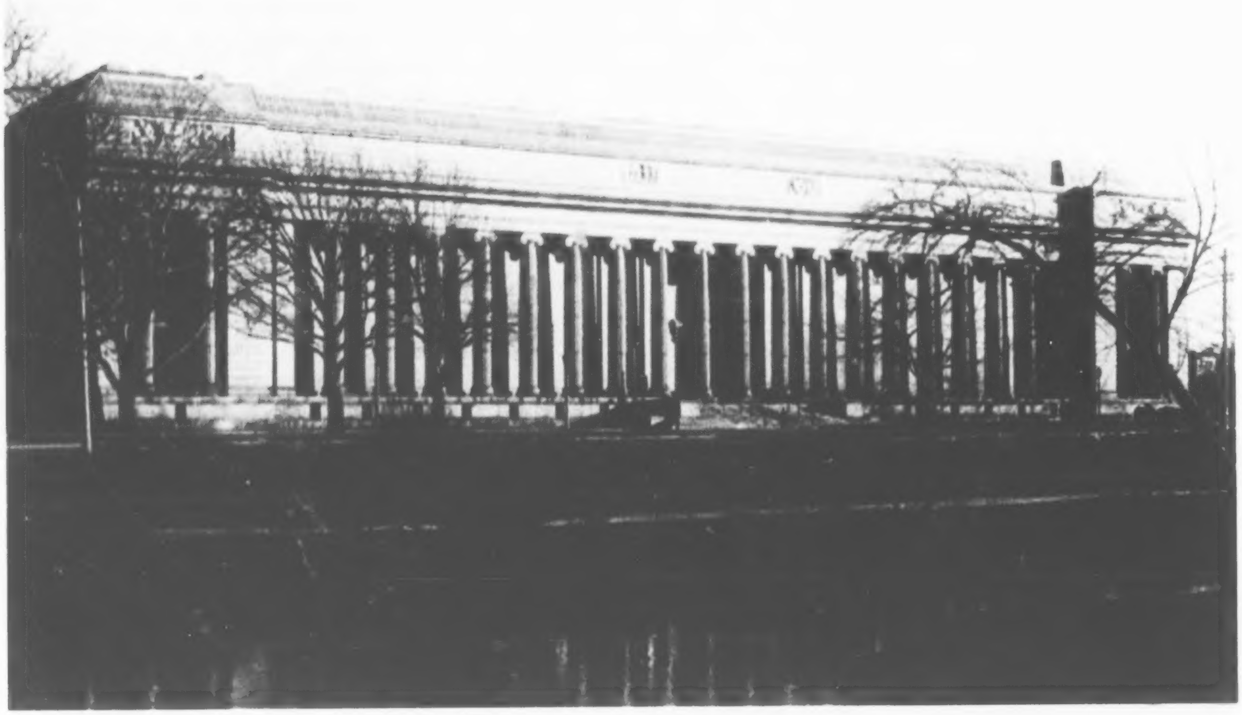
Have fun exploring!



1. Museum of Fine Arts, Huntington Avenue Entrance (exterior)

In 1909, the Museum of Fine Arts outgrew its original building in Copley Square (where the Copley Plaza Hotel is now) and moved to its present location. The new building, an impressive structure of gray granite, was designed in the neoclassical style by Guy Lowell (1870-1927). Symmetrical in design, Lowell's building features a central projecting entranceway with an Ionic portico above. (The Ionic columns and pilasters are based on those of the Erectheion, a temple built on the Acropolis in Athens in the fifth century B.C.) Wings project toward Huntington Avenue at either end (each ending with a pair of Ionic columns), creating a large courtyard in front of the building.

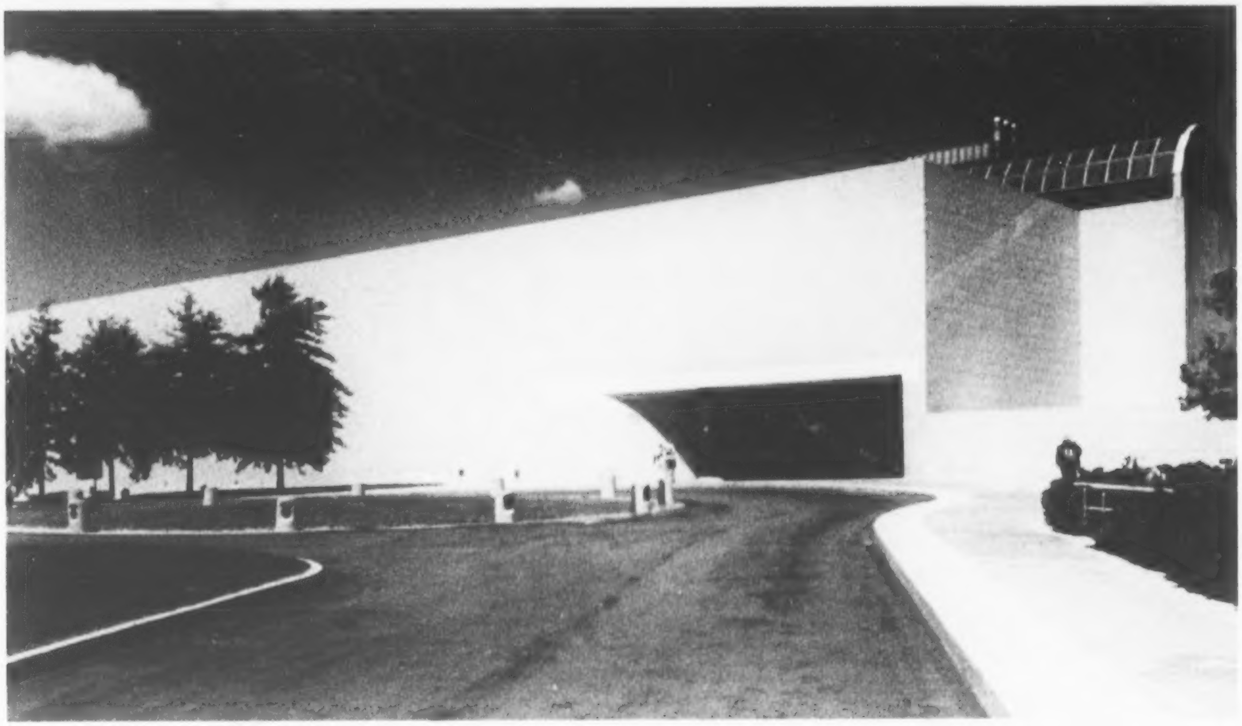
Discussion: What can you guess about the inside of the building from looking at the outside (number of floors, shape and arrangement of rooms, amount of natural light)?



2. Museum of Fine Arts, view of the Evans Wing from the Fenway

The Evans Wing was added to the Museum in 1915 to create more exhibition space for its growing collection of American and European paintings. Like the Huntington Avenue structure, the Evans Wing has a symmetrical facade, with a smooth line of Ionic columns (twenty-two in all) reinforced at both ends by slightly projecting wings. However, the Evans Wing facade is not divided into two equal stories, but instead more closely imitates the form of a Greek temple, with a tall colonnade topped by a narrow attic story. Also like a temple, this wing stands on a stepped podium.

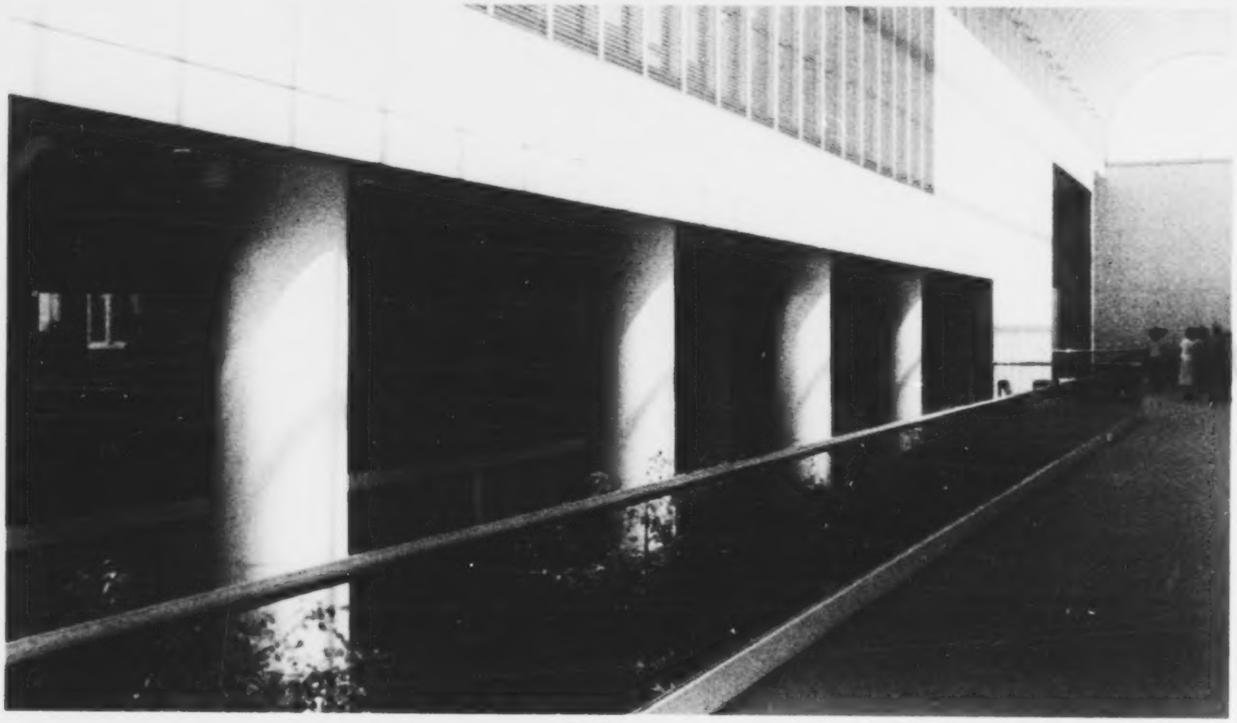
Discussion: Visitors could enter the Museum from this side until the 1970s. Is the actual doorway marked as prominently as the Huntington Avenue entrance?



3. Museum of Fine Arts, West Wing (exterior)

The West Wing, designed by I. M. Pei, was added to the Museum in 1981 in order to provide additional space for special exhibitions and other Museum activities.

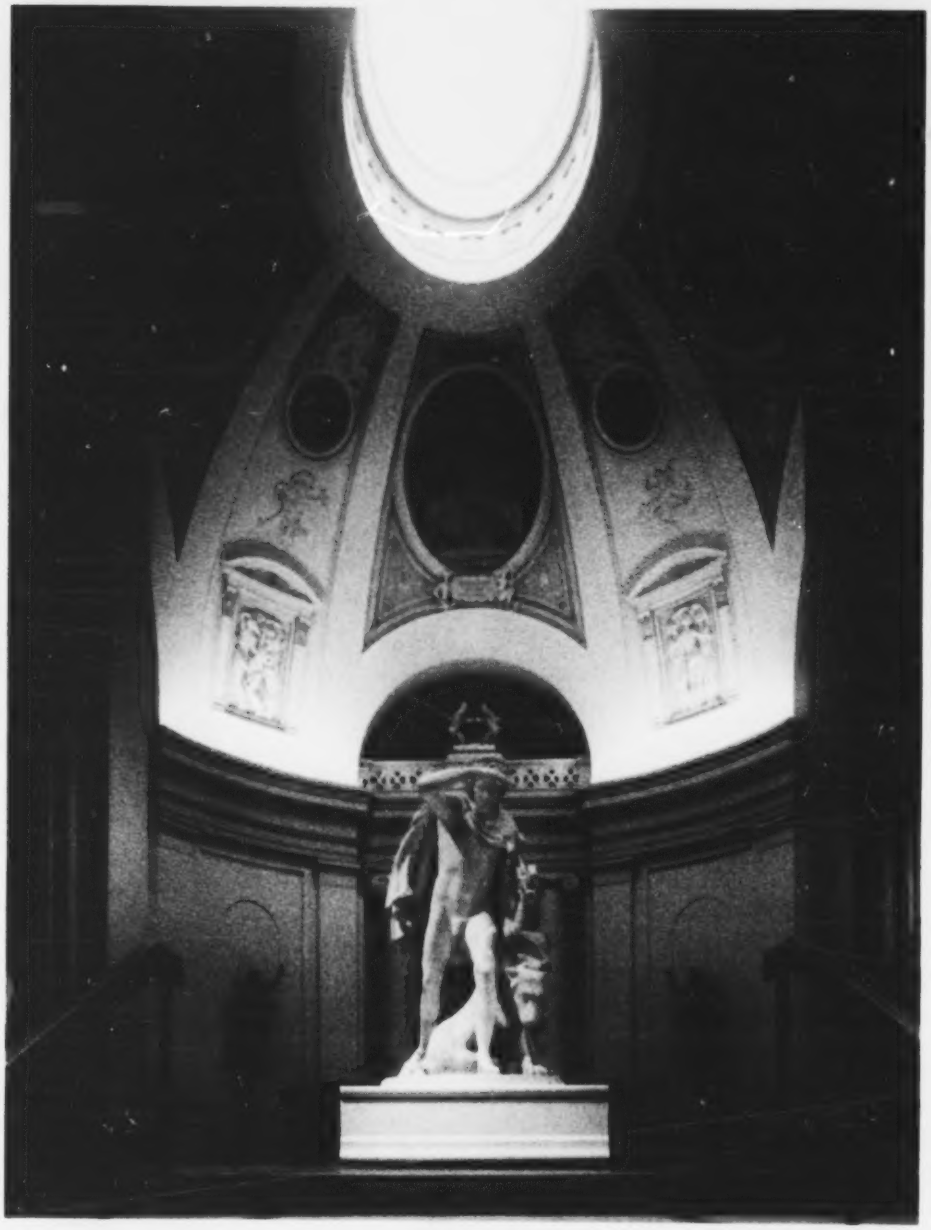
Discussion: Like Lowell, Pei used granite in his design; can you find other similarities? Differences? While the Huntington Avenue entrance comes out toward the visitor, the West Wing entrance is set back. Compare the overall effect of these two entrances, and discuss the advantages of each. Why is the design of an entrance to a building so important? What qualities do you think it should have?



4. Museum of Fine Arts, West Wing (interior, second floor)

Though in the interior of the West Wing Pei used elements based on classical architecture (notice the columns and barrel vault), he seems to have been more interested in suggesting the underlying harmony of classical architecture than in re-creating motifs from specific buildings.

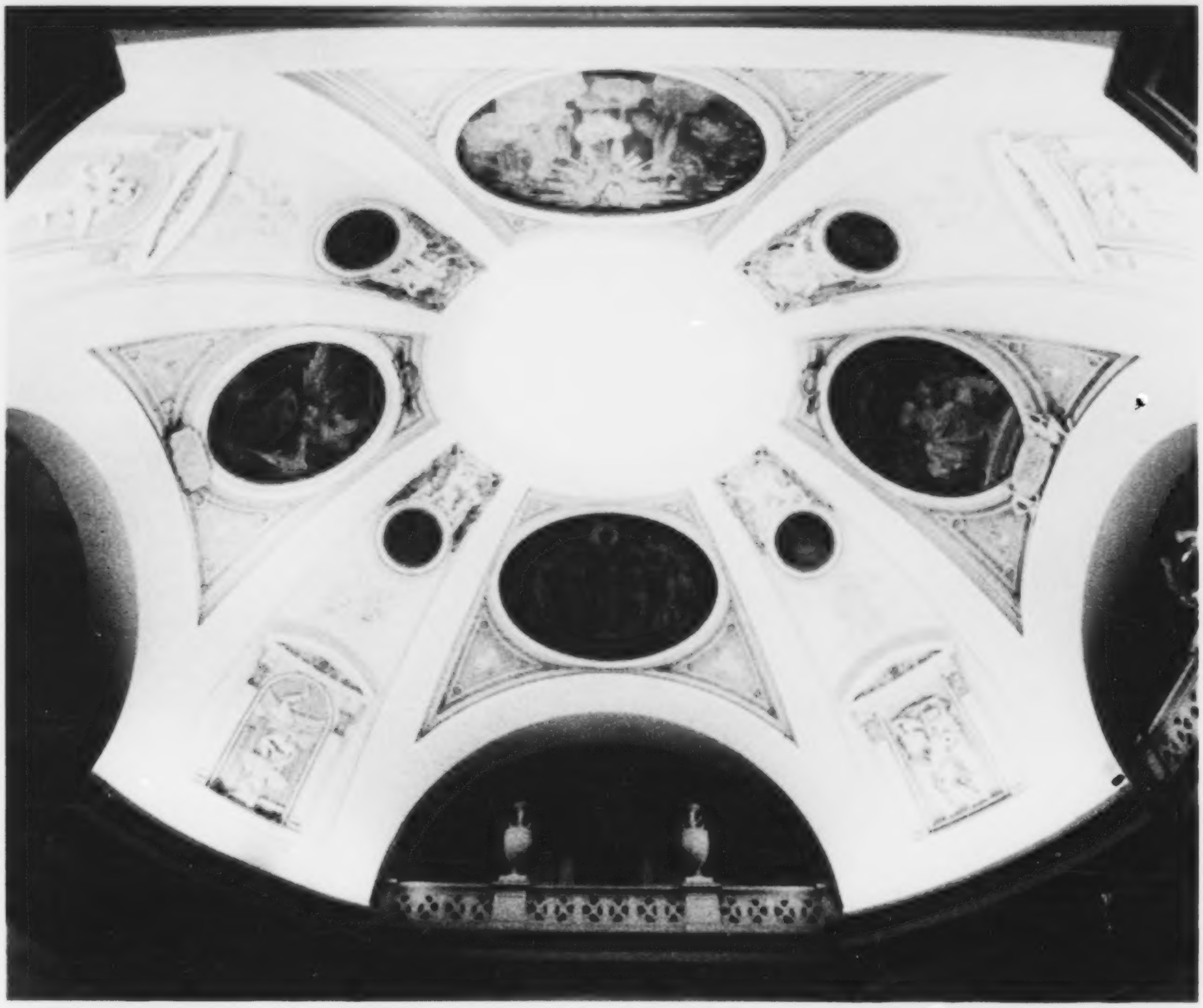
Discussion: After looking at the outside of this building, is the inside what you expected? Does the inside have a different feeling than the outside? List the kinds of materials used on the floor, walls, and ceiling (glass, stainless steel, plastic, etc.); how do they contribute to the overall effect? If you didn't know this was part of a museum, what other activities could you imagine taking place here?



5. Huntington Staircase (looking up)

When the MFA opened its new building in 1909, all visitors came in through the Huntington Avenue entrance. (This entrance was closed in 1991 for budgetary reasons.) The first thing you would have seen as you entered was this stairway.

Discussion: Compare this entrance with that of the West Wing, looking at the materials used, the decoration of walls and ceilings, the lighting, the size of the spaces, etc.



6. Rotunda with Murals by John Singer Sargent

In 1916, Museum trustees asked John Singer Sargent (1856-1925), one of the most prominent American painters of the time, to decorate the dome of the Rotunda. Sargent replaced the original coffered dome with a design that included both paintings and sculpture in low relief. Though Sargent was certainly inspired by Italian Renaissance artists such as Michelangelo and Raphael, he did not paint directly on the dome. He created the works in his studio, and they were installed in the Rotunda upon completion.

The Rotunda decoration consists of a series of loosely related classical subjects. Two of the paintings are particularly related to the idea of a museum: *Apollo and the Nine Muses* (the word *museum* was derived from the word *muse*), and *Architecture, Sculpture, and Painting Protected from the Ravages of Time by Minerva*. Look carefully at this painting and try to identify the various figures (the large central figure represents Sculpture, flanked by the personification of Painting, who holds a palette, on the right and the personification of Architecture on the left). Minerva, wearing a helmet, holds up her cloak to protect the arts from the sharp scythe wielded by Time.

Discussion: What do you think Sargent was trying to say about the function of a museum through these paintings?

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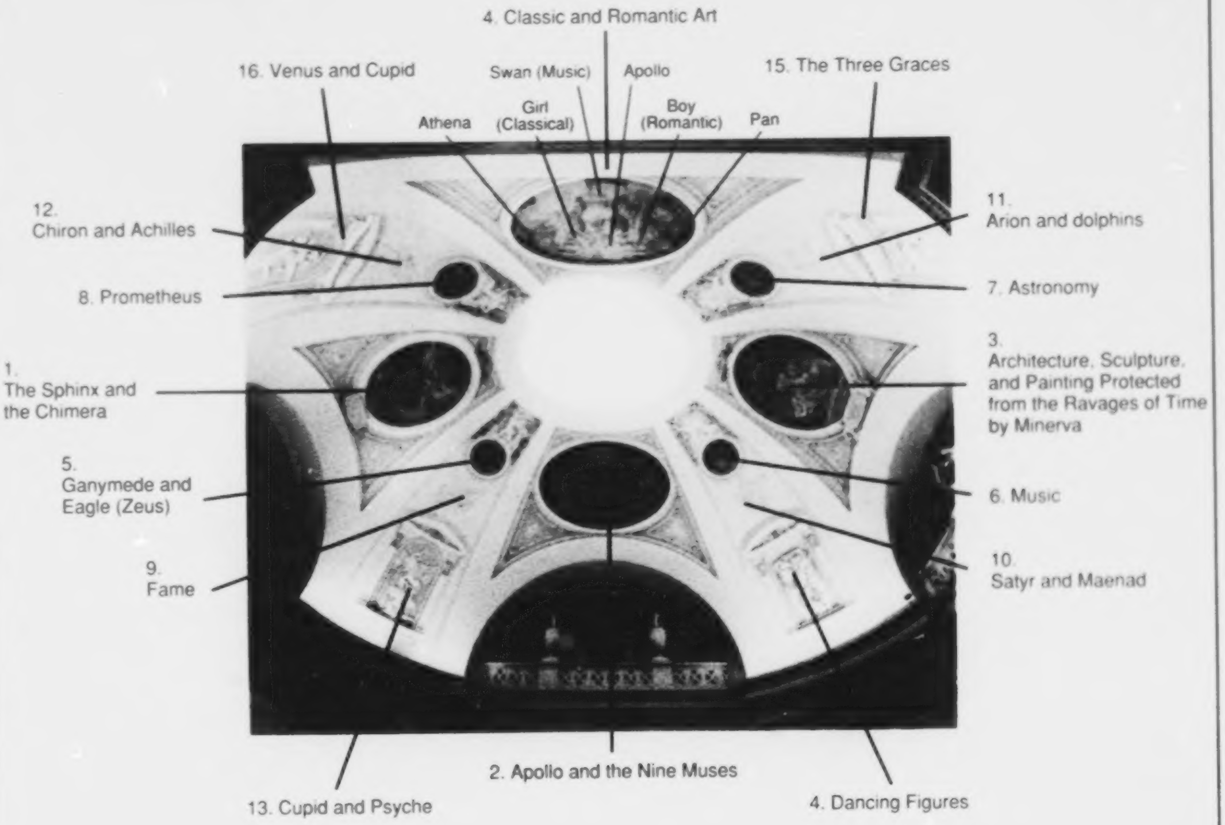

4. Classic and Romantic Art
16. Venus and Cupid
Swan (Music)
Apollo
15. The Three Graces
Athena
Girl (Classical)
Boy (Romantic)
Pan
12. Chiron and Achilles
11. Arion and dolphins
8. Prometheus
7. Astronomy
1. The Sphinx and the Chimera
3. Architecture, Sculpture, and Painting Protected from the Ravages of Time by Minerva
5. Ganymede and Eagle (Zeus)
6. Music
9. Fame
10. Satyr and Maenad
2. Apollo and the Nine Muses
13. Cupid and Psyche
4. Dancing Figures

The Murals

Beginning at the top of the stairway the large paintings in oval frames are:

1. The Sphinx and the Chimera
2. Apollo and the Nine Muses
3. Architecture, Sculpture, and Painting Protected from the Ravages of Time by Minerva
4. Classic and Romantic Art

The smaller paintings in circular frames are:

5. Ganymede and Eagle (Zeus)
6. Music
7. Astronomy
8. Prometheus

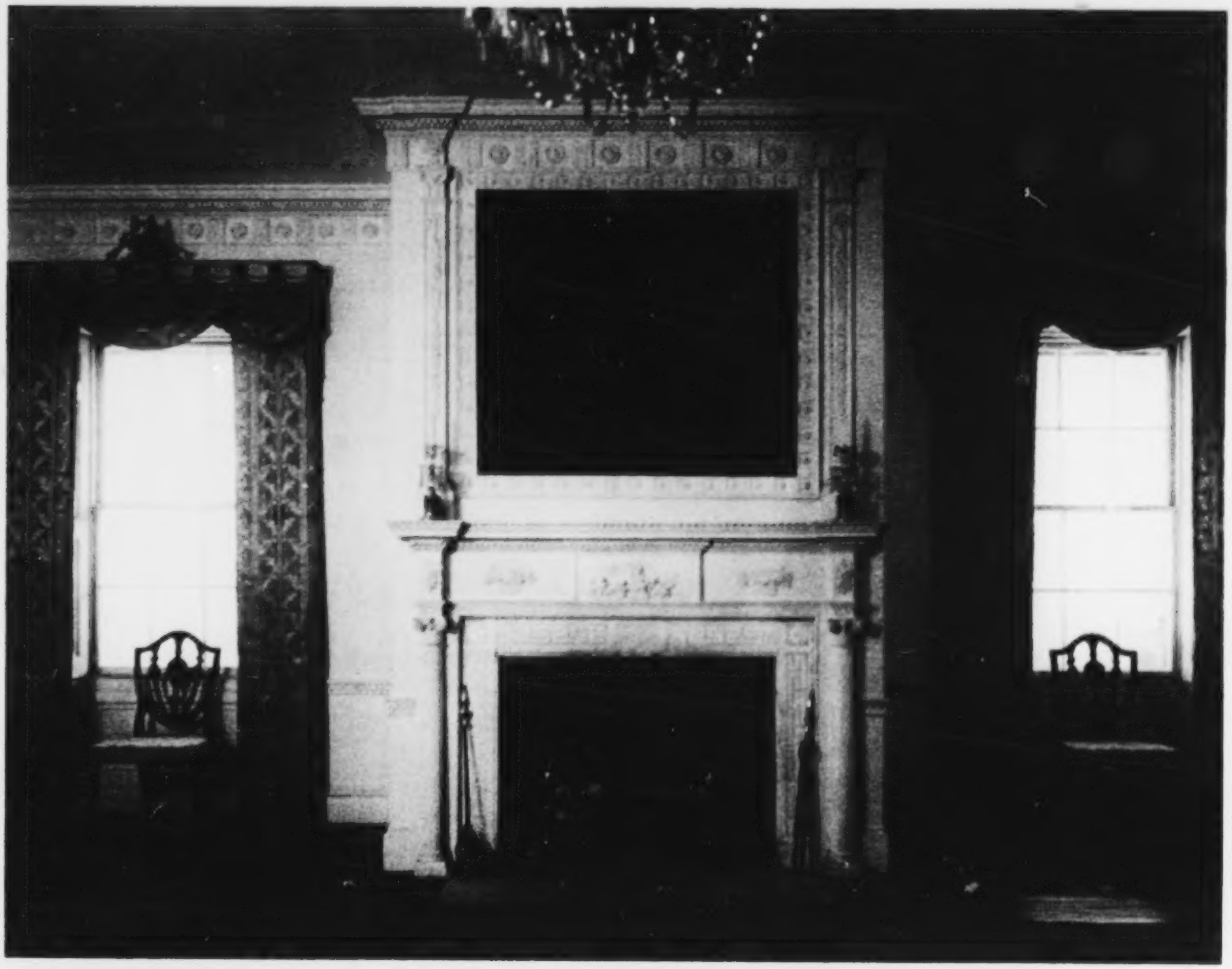
The reliefs below the smaller paintings are:

9. Fame
10. Satyr and Maenad
11. Arion and dolphins
12. Chiron and Achilles

The reliefs in rectangular frames are:

13. Cupid and Psyche
14. Dancing Figures
15. The Three Graces
16. Venus and Cupid

Look for the classical architectural elements Sargent used throughout his design, and find similar forms in the classical galleries. A good place to begin is the model of the Acropolis of Athens (in the classical galleries on the second floor), where you can see both Doric and Ionic temples.



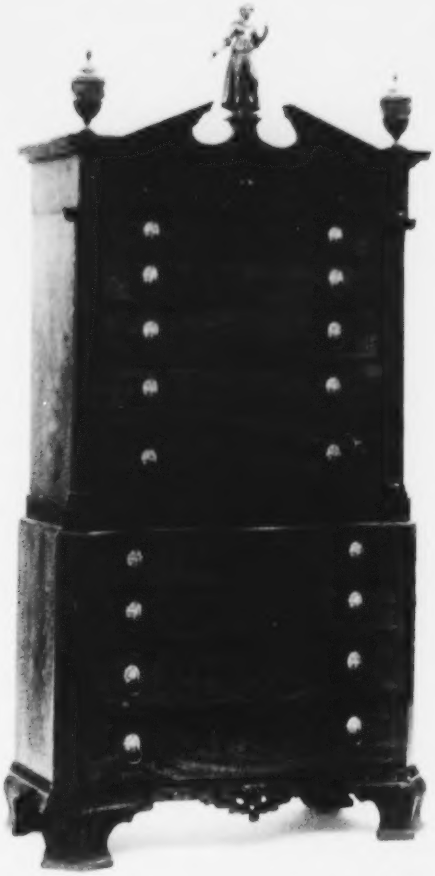
7. Parlor from Oak Hill Attributed to Samuel McIntire (1757-1811)

Danvers, Massachusetts
1800-1801

After the Revolutionary War, Americans looked for a new expression of national identity to reflect the principles and aspirations of their new nation. American artists turned to the art of classical antiquity, borrowing and adapting classical motifs for use in both public and private buildings. Art of this period is called neoclassical because it interpreted classical art in a new way.

This room is from Oak Hill, the house built around 1800 for Elizabeth Derby West (the daughter of Elias Hasket Derby, a wealthy Salem merchant) and her husband, Captain Nathaniel West. The MFA acquired the woodwork of three rooms from Oak Hill in 1922; the house was demolished in 1958 to make way for the North Shore Shopping Center. The Museum also acquired many of the original furnishings owned by family members. As you look at the rooms now, you can see how a wealthy New England family lived in the early 1800s.

The design of the room interiors in Oak Hill — the elaborately carved wood and stucco decoration you can now see in the Museum — is attributed to Samuel McIntire, the most accomplished neoclassical architect and furniture-maker in Salem. McIntire's preference for classical motifs along with the motifs of the basket of flowers and/or fruit is evident in both the architecture and the furniture of the room. The furniture itself is spare and delicate, reflecting what was known at the time about ancient furniture. Neoclassical designers like McIntire tried to create in their own work the same kind of symmetry and clear organization that they admired in classical art.



8. Chest-on-chest

Central figure probably carved by Simeon Skillin, Jr. (1756-1806) or John Skillin (1745-1800)
Design and carving traditionally ascribed to Samuel McIntire (1757-1811)
Cabinet work attributed to a Mr. Lemon (d. 1827)
Salem, Massachusetts, 1796
Mahogany and veneer on pine
M. and M. Karolik Collection
41.580

According to tradition, this impressive piece of furniture chest was made for the family of Elias Hasket Derby, the first American millionaire. The top half of the piece resembles a temple front, with two attached Ionic columns supporting a delicately carved frieze and a broken pediment. At the top stands an allegorical female figure, holding a laurel wreath in her right hand, who may represent the new, victorious American nation. This figure was carved by members of the Skillin family (the Boston ship carvers responsible for carving the capitals of Bulfinch's State House on Beacon Hill), while the carving on the chest itself has been attributed to McIntire. Cornucopias and baskets of flowers decorate the sides and top, symbolizing success and prosperity.

The widespread popularity of classical motifs in house and furniture decoration in the early 1800s is in part responsible for the continuing use of classical forms in American houses up to the present day.

Discussion: The ornamental carving on this double chest of drawers is stylistically related to other work done by Samuel McIntire; in comparing it with the design of the Oak Hill parlor, can you see why? If you were to commission a piece of furniture, what kind of decoration would reflect your own interests and achievements?

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MUSEUM DISCOVERY SHEET

Classical and Neoclassical Architecture at the MFA

Before going into the Museum through the School Group Entrance, have students look at the outside of the building.

Museum of Fine Arts, Huntington Avenue Entrance (exterior)

Identify the classical forms you see

In what ways are they different from or similar to the Greek and Roman buildings you looked at in class?

Why do you think the architect used them for this kind of building?

The planners of the new museum building wanted it to be decorated by the best painters and sculptors of the time. When you go inside, you will see how the artist John Singer Sargent decorated the Rotunda dome, but notice the block of uncarved stone over the doorway: the architect wanted a head of Athena to be carved here, but the museum trustees rejected the prototypes prepared by two sculptors. People still wonder whether it was left uncarved because of problems with the budget, or whether the unfinished block was meant to suggest that the creation of works of art is an ongoing process. If you were commissioned to finish the block, what would you put there? Describe or sketch below

Museum of Fine Arts, view of the Evans Wing from the Fenway

Sketch the arrangement of columns on this side of the building, and compare with the arrangement of columns on the Huntington Avenue side. How do you feel standing in front of each?

Museum of Fine Arts, West Wing (exterior)

Compare the overall effect of the Huntington Avenue entrance, the Fenway entrance, and the West Wing entrance, and discuss the advantages of each.

Why is the design of a building's entrance so important?..

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What qualities do you think a museum entrance should have?................................

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Interior of West Wing

How does it feel entering through the West Wing doorway?.....................................

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How does it feel on the inside looking up/out/around?..

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Does this remind you of any other public places you've been in?...........................

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Museum of Fine Arts, Rotunda with Sargent Murals

See how many motifs from classical architecture and mythology you can identify in and around the Rotunda. List and sketch them here. Then continue looking for similar motifs as you explore the classical and American decorative arts galleries. How do the motifs change in appearance and function over time?

Parlor from Oak Hill

Notice the number of classical forms used throughout, including the modified triglyph-and-metope design of the cornice; the columns and pilasters of the fireplace; meander and dentil patterns; cornucopias; and flower garlands. Find the bead-and-reel and egg-and-tongue designs.

See how many of the motifs in the architecture of this room you can also find carved in the furniture and sketch them here. You can also look in the other Oak Hill rooms for classical motifs.

Name of motif and where you found it:

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MUSEUM DISCOVERY SHEET

Select one gallery or space within the Museum that you especially like being in and one that you don't. Concentrate on the spaces themselves in making your selection and not on the art on view in the galleries. Describe each place using five adjectives. Now write a short paragraph comparing the places. How are they different? How do they make you feel? What is it in their design that gives you that feeling?

Museum Discovery Sheet

Find a classical motif — an architectural detail or a mythological character that you particularly like — anywhere in the Museum (EXCEPT the classical galleries) and sketch it. Then look for that motif (or something similar) in the classical galleries themselves. Compare the two, noting for each the material used to make it, the size, where and how it was used, etc.

ECHOES OF ANTIQUITY

1. Museum of Fine Arts, Huntington Avenue Entrance (exterior)

2. Museum of Fine Arts, Evans Wing (Fenway facade)

3. Museum of Fine Arts, West Wing (exterior)

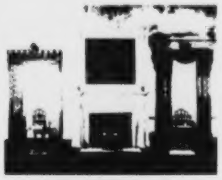
4. Museum of Fine Arts, West Wing (interior, second floor)

5. Huntington Staircase (looking up)

6. Rotunda with Murals by John Singer Sargent

7. Parlor from Oak Hill, attributed to Samuel McIntire

8. Chest-on-chest Design and carving traditionally ascribed to Samuel McIntire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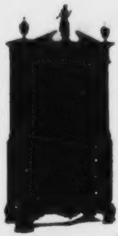
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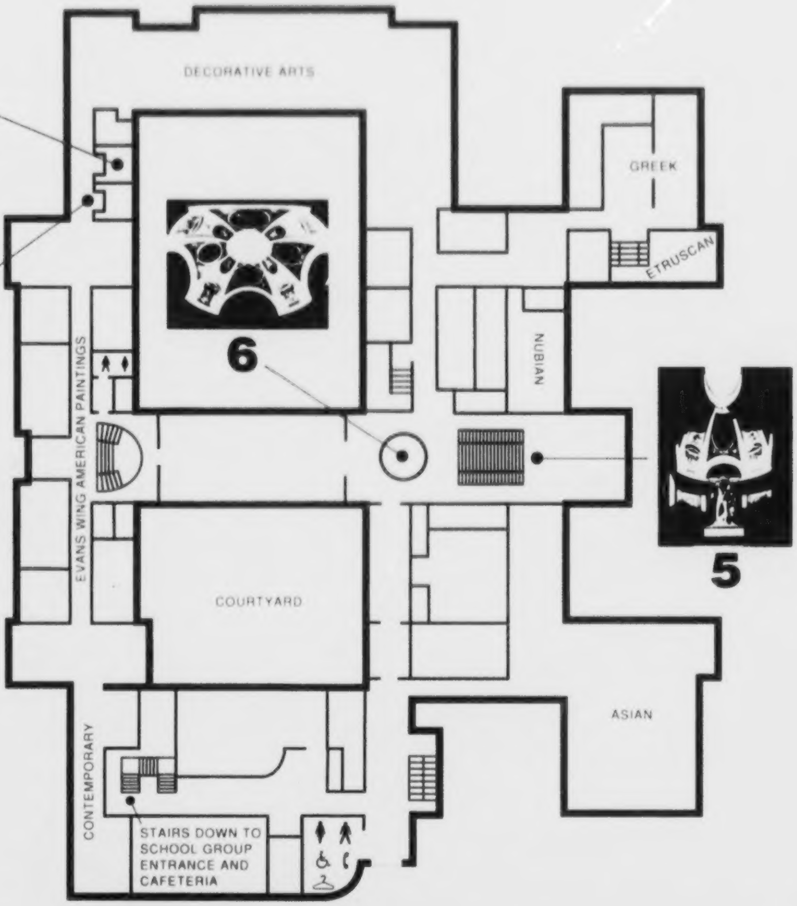
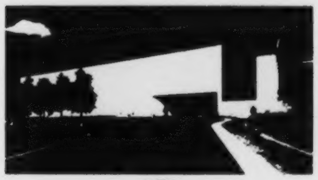

DECORATIVE ARTS
GREEK
ETRUSCAN
NUBIAN
6
EVANS WING AMERICAN PAINTINGS
COURTYARD
ASIAN
CONTEMPORARY
STAIRS DOWN TO SCHOOL GROUP ENTRANCE AND CAFETERIA

5

1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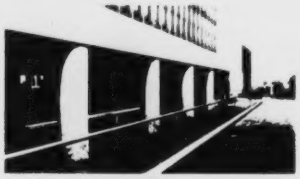
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First Floor

POST-VISIT PROJECTS

A Walk through Time

Take a walk (as a group or individually) through your town or community to scout for examples of classical architectural motifs in various buildings. This may be a one-day walking tour with discussion, or a longer individual or group research project culminating in a class or schoolwide presentation. If this is designed as a longer project, ask students to keep a notebook of their research findings, drawings, and/or photographs. Take note of specific things such as entrances, doors, porches, windows, roofs, columns, pilasters, and ornamentation. Students may also date the buildings, moving from the oldest structures to the more modern designs and describing the changes to assemble an architectural history of their community.

Other Pre- and Post-visit Projects

1. Research and write a report on a prominent Boston building whose design is based on classical architecture (examples: the Massachusetts State House, Quincy Market, the Boston Public Library) and the architect who designed it. Consider how the architect used classical forms, and how those forms contribute to the overall effect.

2. After studying examples of Roman public works and city planning — roads, bridges, viaducts, baths — create a design for some modern public structure. This may be a new design for an already established structure or a newly invented form.

3. Study and compare the layouts of ancient towns with modern cities, perhaps with the help of a guest appearance by an architect or city planner. The class may then embark on a group project that involves designing a new town or city. For help finding a volunteer architect, contact Dan Peruzzi, chairman of the Boston Society of Architects' outreach committee, at (617) 426-0406.

4. Get involved in a community project. For example, attend town meetings to discuss zoning laws, building-conversion practices, practices of town governments, etc. Or the whole class may work together to help convert abandoned grounds into a public park or propose a design for making an old building or warehouse into a viable public space.

5. Build a scale model (in the material of your choice) of a public or private building (school, recreation center, house, etc.), then group buildings to form a town.

6. Design a new wing for the MFA, incorporating at least one motif derived from classical architecture. In your sketch or written description, present your concept of the ideal museum.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

Many of the books listed below contain detailed bibliographies.

General

Boardman, John. *Greek Art.* London, 1985.

Boardman, John; Jasper Griffin, and Oswyn Murray, eds. *Oxford History of the Classical World.* Oxford, 1986.

Chase, George. *Greek, Etruscan and Roman Art: The Classical Collections of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*, rev. ed. Boston, 1972.

Comstock, Mary; and Cornelius Vermeule. *Sculpture in Stone. The Greek, Roman and Etruscan Collections of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.* Boston, 1976.

Henig, Martin, ed. *Handbook of Roman Art.* Ithaca, New York, 1983.

Ramage, Nancy; and Andrew Ramage. *Roman Art.* Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1991.

Richter, G. M. A. *A Handbook of Greek Art.* London, 1974.

Pollitt, J. J. *Art and Experience in Classical Greece.* Cambridge, 1972.

————. *The Art of Greece 1400-31 B.C. Sources and Documents.* Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1986.

————. *The Art of Rome, c. 753 B.C.-A.D. 337. Sources and Documents.* Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1986.

Robertson, Martin. *A History of Greek Art.* Cambridge, England, 1975.

Vercoutter, Jean. *The Image of the Black in Western Art: Vol. 1, From the Pharaohs to the Fall of the Roman Empire.* Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1976.

Vermeule, C.; and M. Comstock. *Sculpture in Stone and Bronze. Additions to the Collections of Greek, Etruscan, and Roman Art, 1971-1988.* Boston, 1988.

Woodford, Susan. *The Art of Greece and Rome.* Cambridge, England, 1991.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

Daily Life

Boardman, John. *Athenian Black Figure Vases*. London, 1974.

————. *Athenian Red Figure Vases*. London, 1975.

Jenkins, Ian. *Greek and Roman Life*. London, 1986.

Pomeroy, Sarah. *Goddesses, Whores, Wives and Slaves: Women in Classical Antiquity*. New York, 1975.

Roebuck, Carl, ed. *The Muses at Work*. Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1969.

Sparkes, Brian. *Greek Pottery: An Introduction*. Manchester, England, 1991.

Mythology

Burns, Lucilla. *Greek Myths*. Austin, 1990.

Hamilton, Edith. *Mythology*. New York, 1953.

Homer. *Iliad*

Homer. *Odyssey*

Virgil, *Aeneid*.

Images of Power

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GLOSSARY

ACANTHUS
A broad-leafed plant with many spikes, used as a decorative pattern on Corinthian capitals and reliefs.

ACROTERIA
Ornaments at the apex of the gable and at the corners of the roof of a temple.

AMPHORA
A Greek vase having an egg-shaped body; a narrow, cylindrical neck; and two curving handles joined to the body at the shoulder and neck. Used for storage and transportation of food and liquids.

ARCHITRAVE
The horizontal architectural element above the columns in a classical temple. Above it are the frieze and then the cornice.

AUGUSTUS
A title for the Roman emperor meaning "revered." The name was originally taken by Octavian but was used subsequently for all reigning emperors.

BLACK FIGURE
A type of Greek vase painting practiced in the seventh and sixth centuries B.C. in which the design was painted mainly in black against a lighter-colored background, usually the color of the natural clay.

CAPITAL
The upper, spreading element of a column, forming a transition between the vertical shaft and the horizontal elements of the architrave.

CARYATID
A female figure used as a support, most commonly for columns or mirror handles.

CENTAUR
A mythological creature that was part man, part horse.

CHIMERA
A mythical beast in the form of a fire-breathing lion, with the head of a goat and a snake for a tail.

COFFERS
The box-like shapes in the ceilings of architectural monuments. Used to reduce the mass of the vaulting.

COLONNADE
A row of columns, either surrounding a temple or standing as an independent architectural element.

CORINTHIAN
The architectural order that is more elaborate than the Doric and Ionic styles. Corinthian capitals combine volutes (scrolls) with acanthus leaves. Below the elaborate capital is a fluted shaft.

CORNICE
The projecting top of an entablature in classical architecture, or a molding at the top of a door, window, or facade of a building.

DENTILS
The row of rectangular blocks arranged like teeth on the lower edge of a cornice.

DORIC
The earliest and simplest of the classical Greek architectural orders.

EGG-AND-DART MOLDING
Alternating ovals ("eggs") and spears with heads in high relief.

EGG-AND-TONGUE MOLDING
Alternating ovals ("eggs") and simple pointed leaf forms.

ENTABLATURE
The upper architectural elements of a temple, above the columns.

FLUTING
Vertical grooves or channels on columns. Doric fluting is shallow and meets at a sharp edge. Ionic and Corinthian fluting has a flat edge between the channels.

FRESCO
Painted decoration applied to plastered walls before the plaster was dry.

FRIEZE
The horizontal space usually decorated with sculpted figures or floral ornament above the main crossbeam in a classical temple. Term often used to describe any decoration arranged in a horizontal band.

GRIFFIN
A monster with the head of an eagle, the body of a lion, the tail of a snake and the wings of a bird.

IONIC
The classical order of architecture in which a fluted column shaft is topped by a capital composed of two large volutes (scrolls).

MAENAD
A female follower of Dionysus, often seen holding cymbals or castanets in ecstatic dances.

METOPE
Square space between triglyphs; may be carved or left plain.

MONUMENTAL
Frequently used to describe works of art that give the impression of great size, whatever their actual dimensions may be.

MOTIF
A distinctive and recurrent feature of theme, shape, or figure in a work of art. Common examples in Greek art are: checkerboard, meander (Greek key), zigzags, and swastika.

PATRON
A person or group of persons who sponsors or supports an artist or artistic endeavor.

PEDIMENT
The triangular gable below the roof at either end of a Greek temple.

PERSONIFICATION
The process of giving human shape to abstract ideas such as Justice, or to rivers and places, such as the Danube or Africa.

PORTICO
A porch, or a line of columns in a colonnade.

POTTERY
Objects made from clay that is shaped and then hardened by heat (fired).

RED FIGURE
A type of Greek vase painting in which the design was outlined in black and the background painted black, leaving the figures the reddish color of the baked clay after firing. This style replaced the black figure style toward the end of the sixth century B.C.

REGISTER
A horizontal division, such as a zone or band, of a pictorial area.

RELIEF
In sculpture, any work in which the figures project from a background. In high relief the figures project at least half of their circumference from the background (as in many sarcophagi). In low relief (bas-relief) the figures project only slightly, and no part is entirely detached from the background (as in coins and medals).

RINCEAU
A sinuous and branching scroll made of a plant stem and leaves.

SPHINX
A mythological creature with a human head on a lion's body, often winged.

STELE
A freestanding slab of stone bearing a relief or an inscription.

STUCCO
Plaster used on walls or ceilings; often refers specifically to three-dimensional plaster ornamentation.

TERRA COTTA
Baked clay, usually used in roof tiles or sculpture.

TRIGLYPH
Three vertical parallel grooves, each separated by a metope, in a Doric frieze.

OTHER MFA RESOURCES

Slide Library	Massachusetts teachers may borrow up to 40 slides for two weeks without charge. Slides must be picked up and returned in person. Slide catalogue is available on request. Open Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, 10 am-4 pm; Wednesday, 10 am-7 pm. Closed Wednesday evenings June through August. Please call (617) 267-9300 x718, for more information.
William Morris Hunt Memorial Library	The Museum's library is open to the public as a non-circulating research collection. Open Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, 1-4:45 pm; Wednesday, 1-7 pm. Closed Wednesday evenings June through August. For further information, call (617) 267-9300 x385.
Teacher Workshops	The Museum's Department of Education offers workshops on aspects of the permanent collections and special exhibitions on a regular basis during the school year. Call (617) 267-9300 x300 to receive a brochure listing current offerings.